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# The Hero in Dryden's Heroic Tragedy: a Revaluation.

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A REVALUATION.

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THE HERO IN DRYDEN'S HEROIC TRAGEDY: A REVALUATION

A Dissertation

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## ABSTRACT

While it concentrates on form, sources, and influences, a large part of the body of modern criticism on Dryden's heroic plays neglects characterization when it does not ignore it altogether. One of the major consequences of such a neglect is to foster the image of the "heroic" hero as a self-centered individual whose superhuman valor is directed toward the achievement of both a personal limitless desire for power and a superhuman love for a perfect heroine. A widespread assumption that the heroic tragedy is essentially a "romantic" manifestation derives directly from such a view of the hero. A parallel assumption is that the heroic tragedy is a genre alien to the English genius and outside the normal evolution of the English drama. A more or less strict adherence to neo-classical rules derived from Continental and mainly French critics is made partly responsible for the failure of the English heroic tragedy.

This study attempts to refute partly some of the above mentioned critical stands, through a study of the characterization of the hero in Dryden's heroic tragedy. First, the hero is studied in relation to the plot situation -- that is, the play considered as drama and not as a rostrum for the voicing of various ideas. Then an interpretation of the archetype of the heroic hero is offered. This

interpretation contradicts the commonly accepted one and shows him instead as the embodiment of common sense and order. Taking into account this view of the hero, Dryden's heroic tragedies are studied in relation to the contemporary intellectual and historical milieu and to Dryden's own psychological evolution. As a corollary proof the hero in Dryden's other serious plots is compared to the hero of the heroic plays. It has also seemed of value to compare plays by Dryden, Corneille and Racine, and to show the affinity between Dryden's and Corneille's work as opposed to Racine's.

The conclusion arrived at in this study of the "heroic" hero is that Dryden's heroic plays far from being a "passing whim," a movement outside the main course of English literature, are, on the contrary, a true reflection of the period and of the author, and are an important link in the evolution of English drama.

## CHAPTER I

### CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN CRITICISM OF DRYDEN'S HEROIC PLAYS

Though extensive, criticism of the Restoration heroic tragedy has not yet arrived at a detailed and comprehensive characterization of the hero. Commentaries, remarks, even interpretations are numerous, but are to be found only in connection with other problems raised. In many instances, this lack of interest in the psychology of the hero results from the opinion that there is no psychology to speak of. Lewis N. Chase calls this psychology "impossible because beyond nature...There was little or no attempt to draw men and women, but rather to present abstract human qualities....The Restoration hero and his train proved to be made of such perishable stuff because the composition was found wanting in that sense, which to the exaltation of the populace they despised, is called common sense."<sup>1</sup> J. W. Tupper considers characterization in the heroic play "very slight" because "no attempt is made to build plot about character; ...plot consists of a series of happenings more or less theatric in nature, and without any vital connection with each other, and with the character figuring in them...the characterization of these plays amounts to nothing..."<sup>2</sup> Margaret Sherwood holds the opinion that "there are no subtle strokes in character treatment."<sup>3</sup> So does Pendlebury, who concludes that "Dryden can hardly be praised for the



psychological truth of his character-drawing."<sup>4</sup> Allardyce Nicoll speaks of the "impossible psychology"<sup>5</sup> of the heroic tragedy. Bonamy Dobrée thought no differently in 1956 than he did in 1929, when he said, "Absence of subtlety, or, in the modern jargon, a lack of psychology, is what they [the heroic tragedies] can most justly be reproached with."<sup>6</sup>

The list of critics holding these same opinions is by no means exhausted. But granting that Dryden is no psychological wizard, yet we are confronted in each of his plays with at least one character that speaks and acts for five acts; something can and should be done to analyze this character; the apparent lack of profundity of the character is no excuse for brushing the problem aside. It is good at this point to refrain from citing Dryden's opinion concerning the importance of the hero since his practice could be a far cry from his theory. This is what Chase seems to imply: "...Character was doubtless considered an important part of dramatic construction.... The name in itself--heroic drama--implies necessarily the presence and infers the importance of a hero. To portray him as the word was understood in dramatic parlance of that time, must have been a primary object....It is plain that if this was the theory, practice did not bear it out. It is also plain that whatever the theory, practice did not bear it out for the ideal lacked consistency."<sup>7</sup>

Yet, more often than not, the same critics who have nothing but contempt for the characterization of the hero are careful to point out its importance. Chase's conclusion is that the heroic tragedy

"...presented a shadow, at least, of true heroic character."<sup>8</sup> Also, "The reader's impressions of the plays are usually dominated by the figure of the hero," says Pendlebury,<sup>9</sup> who attributes the "predominance of the hero" to the influence of epic poetry.

This failure to try to understand the psychology of the hero in the heroic tragedy would be negligible if it were not that it distorts the critics' final judgment on the heroic tragedy itself. Having to account for a literary phenomenon which occupied at least one generation of writers<sup>10</sup> and among them the acknowledged foremost writer of his age, Dryden, ultimately almost all do one of two things: blame what they call the deficiencies of the heroic play on continental and mainly French influence; or, on the contrary, minimize these influences and try very hard to make heroic tragedy fit into a preceding English dramatic genre, calling it a degeneracy of that genre; both schools of critics more often than not end up by concentrating on the sources of the heroic tragedy rather than on the heroic tragedy proper. When not occupied with the sources, they turn to questions of form. In examining some of this criticism, the chronological approach is probably the most rewarding since it shows better than any other the interplay and exchange of ideas among critics.

If we start with Scott, we find that for him "The heroic, or rhyming plays were borrowed from the French, to whose genius they are better suited than to the British...we have little doubt that the heroic tragedies were the legitimate offspring of the French Romances of Calprenède and Scudéry."<sup>11</sup> Scott is not alone in his

opinion: "The heroic plays," says A. W. Ward, "from the first stood under the direct influence of foreign literary growths."<sup>12</sup> Chase agrees that "the French form of tragedy was welcomed in England, with rhyme, but without reason, and though it soon drifted away in spirit from its origin, it remained to the end foreign, exotic, un-English."<sup>13</sup> Though we are able to follow Mr. Chase's general trend of thought, it is all we can do since he fails to show how and why the heroic tragedy "drifted away in spirit from its origin," and does not give a definition of what is "un-English" and what is not.

Though concurring in stressing French influence, C. G. Child takes the other point of view: "Dryden followed Davenant in his use of his sources [the French romances], as he did in the manner of his treatment of the material thus drawn."<sup>14</sup> Child considers this important because otherwise "a further point of paramount importance will not clearly appear--the development of the heroic play out of the earlier Romantic drama," since in Davenant "...the process of perversion of Fletcherian romanticism can be distinctly traced."<sup>15</sup>

Tupper elaborates on Child's premises: "It is, however, with the romantic plays of Beaumont and Fletcher that the most striking resemblances will be found to exist." He does make, however, a distinction which could be fruitful: "It is the removal of an external obstacle and not internal conflict, that here [in the heroic play] contributes action..."<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, he does not develop this idea.

Margaret Sherwood tends to agree with the theory of foreign influence: "The Heroic plays have certain importance from the fact

that they form a curious commentary on Restoration taste, but they hardly form a link in the development of English drama. They reflect only a passing whim."<sup>17</sup>

F. E. Schelling is a staunch advocate of the Beaumont and Fletcher influence theory: "For in this justly famous tragicomedy [Philaster] combine all the qualities of the species to set a standard from which this type of play was little to vary until it declined into its logical successor, the Restoration heroic drama."<sup>18</sup> Comparing both types of plays, he comes to the conclusion that "When everything has been said, all that the authors of the new heroic play accomplished by way of actual novelty was to exaggerate what had already been exaggerated, to heighten still more and make more florid an already exalted diction, and to substitute for the supple blank-verse of Fletcher or the hybrid prose-verse of Carlell, the regular tread of the rhymed couplet."<sup>19</sup>

Pendlebury disagrees strongly, minimizing both the national and French influence and emphasizing instead the influence of epic form: "These views seem to me to exaggerate the influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on the heroic drama, and to ignore the essential quality which distinguishes the Restoration heroic play from their tragicomedy. It is quite easy to prove that the heroic play has much in common with the decadent romantic drama, but it is the imposition of epic form on the romantic material which creates the heroic play."<sup>20</sup> This critic then proceeds to point out the differences between the two types of plays, and one has the impression he is going to tackle the

problem of character. "It [Dryden's drama] limited the heroic play to a code of sentiment, and it produced a unity which was rather epic than dramatic, since it depended on the character of the hero."<sup>21</sup> But again, after his emphasis on Dryden's lack of psychological insight in the passage previously cited, he loses himself in the question of form: "Since then the most striking characteristics of the heroic play, the epic construction, the unity of tone, and the predominance of the hero, cannot be regarded as being inherited from Beaumont and Fletcher, it is obvious that their origins must be sought in that critical theory..."<sup>22</sup>

Allardyce Nicoll's criticism of the heroic tragedy is mainly descriptive: "...The heroic play as well as the comedy of manners is to be explained by a three-fold formula—Elizabethan sub-stratum, the spirit of the age and foreign influence."<sup>23</sup> On the whole, Nicoll's treatment is confined to examination of these sources.

W. S. Clark goes back to Scott's stand: "The heroic plays mark a distinct breach with the past."<sup>24</sup> His opinion is that the "foundation" and "inspiration" of the heroic play are the French Romances.

Bonamy Dobrée studies the heroic tragedy from the point of view of form. "The dramatists of the day were trying to express romantic ideas in a form specially evolved for the classical."<sup>25</sup> He explains the heroic tragedy by the need which the age had for heroism. "The aspect which first strikes every reader of Restoration tragedy is its unreality....The age was hungry for heroism, and feeling itself balked of it in real life was happy to find it in its art."<sup>26</sup> Allardyce Nicoll

has arrived at the same conclusion: "The age was debilitated; it was distinctly unheroic; and yet it was not so cynical as to throw over entirely the inculcation of heroism....The heroic play is like a tale of a Land of No-Where....We are interested in that land, but we do not hope ever to enter therein. The persons who move and speak there are not our equals, nor do they even draw the same breath as we do."<sup>27</sup> In his 1956 study on Dryden, Dobrée still expresses the same view and calls the heroic tragedy "glorious extravaganza....Emotions, states of mind, which are to the final degree romantic are tailored into, or at least partly wear, severe classical garb....Be prepared to enter a world of absolute emotions...."<sup>28</sup>

Kathleen Lynch, disagreeing with Clark (and Scott) holds that the French Romances throw little light on the structure of heroic drama, and though she admits some influence derived from Marlowe and Beaumont and Fletcher, she argues, nevertheless, that the "marked Platonism" of the heroic drama differentiates it from their dramatic work: "Fletcher's lovers are not, however, Platonic ritualists. They do not pass through the successful shapes of discipline in love whereby the personages of heroic drama are tested as love's converts."<sup>29</sup> However, she arrives at her conclusion in a somewhat puzzling way; she notes that though Dryden took many of his plots from the French romances, "the play remains widely separated from the romances in method and effect"; she points out that Dryden omitted "the charming girlhood of Almahide, the sedate

descriptions of Moorish revels," when he wrote The Conquest of Granada. (Considering he still wrote ten acts, many readers are probably grateful for the omission.)"His chief concern is with the events of the ninth and shortest book of the romance and these events he amplifies and reshapes in dramatic form, placing emphasis on moments which are of high interest from the dramatist's point of view. In thus selecting from the formless French romances suitable ingredients for Platonic drama, Dryden must have been influenced by the Platonic dramatists."<sup>30</sup>

The essential weakness of this argument is pointed out by S. C. Osborn, who stresses Miss Lynch's own admission that "In Dryden's plays Platonic interests are at times overshadowed by claims of patriotism, personal honor, and filial devotion."<sup>31</sup> He refutes the point that these plays are studies in Platonic love: "Unquestionably Dryden's heroic love does reflect the sentimental, metaphysical Platonism of French heroic romances and drama," but he contends that "Dryden's drama contains not one but two kinds of love, each of a long tradition..."<sup>32</sup> He goes on to analyze the concept of "heroical love" in Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy and states that "Dryden's plays...exhibit all of the conditions, symptoms and effects of heroical love....Dryden's characters almost invariably describe love as a physical and mental disease....In each play erotic passion and jealousy provide nearly all the motivation."<sup>33</sup> Mr. Osborn's criticism is interesting; unfortunately he never relates the characters' utterances to the plot situation of the drama and does not

discriminate as to who says what and when; and we get sweeping statements such as "no heroic lover is expected to behave rationally."<sup>34</sup>

Emphasizing the influence of contemporary philosophical ideas, Mildred E. Hartsock displays the same shortcoming. Having arrived at the conclusion that Dryden was very much under the influence of Hobbesian ideology, her object is "to study important intellectual trends of the 17th Century which are reflected in the plays of Dryden; to discover in which of these the poet was most apparently interested; and finally, through comparison of the serious and comic plays and through reference to the non-dramatic work, to secure what evidence there is of the writer's own probable belief."<sup>35</sup> Here again this critic analyzes speeches, cites out of context and arrives at unwarranted conclusions since she does not discriminate between villain and hero, and does not take into account the plot situation. When, for instance, she states that "Dryden's characters are self-centered and their conceptions of the virtue are selfishly utilitarian,"<sup>36</sup> all her examples are drawn from characterizations of villains, except for one speech of Aureng-Zebe's which she cites out of context; we shall have occasion later in this study to show how on the contrary this same speech viewed in relation to the rest of the play makes the hero even more unselfishly heroic. Her conclusion that Dryden's plays "show no significant concern with the more idealistic current....The prevailing spirit is worldly, sceptical, even materialistic"<sup>37</sup> may be right for the particular passage she is



considering, but it is certainly not warranted as a general conclusion, since it is not Dryden who is speaking but a character in a play. The distinction as to whether a hero or a villain is made to be the exponent of Hobbesian ideas makes all the difference in the world, since we are to admire and imitate the hero, and rejoice in the villain's downfall.

This influence of Hobbesian ideas is rejected by J. A. Winterbottom. He cites examples from heroic plays in which reason is not just a means to satisfy the passions as in Hobbes and draws attention to the many instances of moral obligations which the heroes obey unselfishly.<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately his article is not exhaustive and is simply meant to point to some of the inconsistencies of M. E. Hartsock's article.

A. E. Parsons, like Pendlebury, goes back to the epic influence and holds that the heroic play was "produced by the shaping of romantic material to the epic pattern."<sup>39</sup> His approach is new, however, in that he finds two currents into which heroic theory developed and which he calls Homeric and Virgilian, the Homeric type being exemplified in the French drama (more "masculine") and the Virgilian in English drama "which centers in the union of a pair of lovers...."<sup>40</sup>

Cecil V. Deane in his Dramatic Theory and the Rhymed Heroic Play concentrates mainly on questions of form and sources,<sup>41</sup> while D. N. Smith has nothing essential to say on the characterization in the heroic plays, but nevertheless uses such words as "extravagance"

and "bravura" in speaking of them.<sup>42</sup>

A more recent article by Mr. Thomas H. Fujimura is rather interesting in that it tries to show the heroic tragedy as an expression of the age, conveying some of the ideas, ideals, and tendencies of that age. He disagrees entirely with the opinion of Nicoll, Dobrée, and Chase that the Restoration public, being unheroic, found a vicarious satisfaction in heroic plays. "Actually, there is little evidence for the common assumption that the Restoration was unheroic, and that consequently the age was hungry for heroism. Further, no one familiar with its youthful vigor, its vital interest in science, and its optimistic confidence in the powers of reason and its empiricism, would regard the period as debilitated."<sup>43</sup> He contends that critics have overlooked the intellectual appeal of Dryden's plays: "It would not be surprising to find a skeptical and naturalistically inclined audience patronizing his plays if these qualities are conspicuous in them."<sup>44</sup> Though agreeing with Miss Hartsock as to the abundance of Hobbesian elements in Dryden's plays, he points out that her conclusions are unwarranted. He is of the opinion that the central theme of these plays is the struggle between love and honor, two seemingly idealistic conceptions, but his contention is that "...even the central theme, the struggle between love and honor, is strongly naturalistic in conception....These two concepts must be regarded primarily as naturalistic notions; that is, they represent neither a spiritual nor a moral ideal but rather a passionate commitment to sex and self-aggrandizement....This picture of man represents,

in essence, the naturalistic subversion of Christian humanism, which emphasizes man's rationality and his control of the passions.... Dryden's heroic plays then extol the primacy of passion, and sex is glorified as the most powerful of human passions."<sup>45</sup> Fujimura transforms honor into a naturalistic concept by having it replace reason and making of it a passion: "Honor for the naturalistic opponents of the Christian humanists [is] ...the ireful virtue. [It]...is nothing more or less than one of the dominant passions";<sup>46</sup> and he qualifies the intellectual appeal that Dryden's plays had on their audiences as "cultural primitivism." It is "Dryden's primitivism" that appeals to the "sophisticated Restoration audience."<sup>47</sup>

The weaknesses of Mr. Fujimura's conclusions are brought out by Miss Jean Gagen. She ably points out that one can find in Dryden's plays many sides to one concept, including those that flaunt all moral laws and represent a passion of commitment to sex and self-aggrandizement; but that "the heroes and heroines...are committed to concepts of love and honor which have a real, though romantically exaggerated, ethical content."<sup>48</sup> She notes that Mr. Fujimura disregarded Mr. Osborn's conclusions as to the two kinds of love found in Dryden's heroic tragedies, and proceeds to a discussion of the concept of honor. Basing this discussion on Mr. Curtis Watson's Shakespeare and the Renaissance Concept of Honor,<sup>49</sup> she comes to the conclusion that "...the view of love and honor as primarily naturalistic passions devoid of ethical considerations is characteristic of only the most deeply-dyed villains in Dryden's heroic plays....

Repudiations of love and honor as ethical ideals are never permanently sanctioned by the heroes and heroines of these plays."<sup>50</sup>

A recent article of Mr. Cyrus Hoy does not change this general picture of the criticism of the heroic tragedy. He finds that tragedy "comes to dwell more and more exclusively on erotic passion as its one and only theme;...The tragic issue comes typically to turn upon a more or less abstractly conceived conflict of reason and passion..."<sup>51</sup> Relying on Aristotle's definition of tragedy, he contends that Restoration tragedy is not tragic since the virtuous do not suffer, but is "idealistic and sentimental, which at first glance seems odd, given the naturalistic, materialistic, scientific bent of Restoration thought."<sup>52</sup> His explanation is nothing but a reshaping of what Nicoll, and Chase, and Dobrée have said before: "All of which [ideals of love, honor, reason, virtue] are proportionately appealing as they are remote from the experience of the times."<sup>53</sup> He seems, however, to contradict himself where he goes on to say that "In Restoration London, love means sex, honor is a word, reason is the shrewdest calculating self-interest, virtue is a sham ....As has often been pointed out, there is a sense in which Restoration comedy and tragedy balance and complement one another, with the comedy portraying things as they are, and the tragedy portraying things as they might be or ought to be."<sup>54</sup> He concludes that "Restoration tragedy is 'theatrical' in the worst sense: that is to say, the sense in which drama falsifies life in order to project onto the stage the collective image of itself which the audience wishes to see."<sup>55</sup>

Though by no means exhaustive, this review of the criticism of Dryden's heroic tragedies is lengthy enough to show a general lack of concern with Dryden's characterization. The plays are mainly studied from the point of view of sources and influences, form, or ideas and concepts embodied in them. When a character is analyzed, the analysis is only an illustration in a discussion about an idea or concept.

The object of this study is not primarily to refute any of the above cited opinions. It is rather to approach the problem of Dryden's plays from a different point of view, from the inside rather than from the outside, and to use the hero as the means to this approach. It is hoped that through a study of the characterization of the hero and his relation to the plot, a more sympathetic if not better understanding of the heroic play will be gained; and mainly, the understanding that the heroic play is not just a "passing whim" but an integral part of the neo-classical period which it reflects and embodies.

## FOOTNOTES

### CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup>Lewis N. Chase, The English Heroic Play (New York, 1903), pp. 46, 52, 111.

<sup>2</sup>J. W. Tupper, "The Relation of the Heroic Play to the Romances of Beaumont and Fletcher," PMLA, XI (1905), 602.

<sup>3</sup>Margaret Sherwood, Dryden's Dramatic Theory and Practice (New Haven, 1914), p. 66.

<sup>4</sup>B. J. Pendlebury, Dryden's Heroic Plays: A Study of the Origin (London, 1923), p. 8.

<sup>5</sup>Allardyce Nicoll, British Drama (London, 1925), p. 225.

<sup>6</sup>Bonamy Dobrée, Restoration Tragedy, 1660-1720 (Oxford, 1929), p. 33 and John Dryden (London, 1956).

<sup>7</sup>Chase, p. 107.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 194.

<sup>9</sup>Pendlebury, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup>D'Avenant's The Siege of Rhodes was first acted in 1656.

<sup>11</sup>Works of Dryden, ed. Scott and Saintsbury (Edinburgh, 1882-93), II, 317.

<sup>12</sup>A. W. Ward, English Dramatic Literature (London, 1899), III, 301.

<sup>13</sup>Chase, p. 22.

<sup>14</sup>C. G. Child, "The Rise of the Heroic Play," MLN, XIX (1904), 168.

- 15Ibid., pp. 168-169.
- 16Tupper, p. 587.
- 17Sherwood, p. 60.
- 18F. E. Schelling, English Drama (New York, 1914), p. 182.
- 19Ibid., p. 244.
- 20Pendlebury, p. 6.
- 21Ibid., p. 8.
- 22Ibid., p. 9.
- 23Allardyce Nicoll, A History of Restoration Drama, 1660-1700 (Cambridge, 1928), p. 82.
- 24W. S. Clark, "The Sources of the Restoration Heroic Play," RES, IV (1928), 63.
- 25Dobrée, Restoration Tragedy, p. 27.
- 26Ibid., p. 16.
- 27Allardyce Nicoll, Restoration Drama, p. 79.
- 28Dobrée, John Dryden, pp. 17-18.
- 29Kathleen Lynch, "Conventions of Platonic Drama in the Heroic Plays of Orrery and Dryden," PMLA, XLIV (June, 1929), 457.
- 30Ibid.
- 31Ibid., p. 458.
- 32S. C. Osborn, "Heroical Love in Dryden's Heroic Drama," PMLA, LXXIII (1958), 481.
- 33Ibid., p. 484.
- 34Ibid., p. 487.
- 35Mildred E. Hartsock, "Dryden's Plays: A Study in Ideas," in Seventeenth Century Studies, 2nd Series (Princeton, 1937), ed. Robert Shafer, p. 74.
- 36Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 174.

<sup>38</sup>J. A. Winterbottom, "The Place of Hobbesian Ideas in Dryden's Tragedies," JEGP, LXVII (1958), 665-683. In a preceding article, "The Development of the Hero in Dryden's Plays," JEGP, LII (April, 1953), 161-173, Mr. Winterbottom develops the theory that in the later plays the hero is more social than in the earlier plays, but on the whole he seems to accept the conventional portrait of the heroic hero as a ranting self-centered individual.

<sup>39</sup>A. E. Parsons, "The English Heroic Play," MLR, XXXII (1938), 3.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>41</sup>Cecil V. Deane, Dramatic Theory and the Rhymed Heroic Play (London, 1931).

<sup>42</sup>David Nichol Smith, John Dryden (Cambridge, 1950), p. 32.

<sup>43</sup>Thomas H. Fujimura, "The Appeal of Dryden's Heroic Plays," PMLA, LXXV (March, 1960), 37.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., pp. 37 and 40.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>48</sup>Jean Gagen, "Love and Honor in Dryden's Heroic Plays," PMLA, LXXVII (June, 1962), 209.

<sup>49</sup>Curtis Watson, Shakespeare and the Renaissance Concept of Honor, Princeton, 1960. Miss Gagen does not seem to be aware of the rather adverse criticism levelled at Mr. Watson's work in SQ, XIII (1962), 357.

<sup>50</sup>Gagen, p. 219.

<sup>51</sup>Cyrus Hoy, "The Effect of the Restoration on the Drama," TSL, VI (1961), 87.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 91.



## CHAPTER II

### THE HERO IN DRYDEN'S HEROIC PLAYS

The purpose of the following section is to let Dryden's plays speak for themselves. These plays are so packed with action that it is difficult to remember them accurately without referring to them. Inasmuch as a thorough acquaintance with the plays is necessary to the understanding of the hero, it has seemed important to give brief summaries of the plots. Of necessity, these summaries can only be dreary, pedestrian and repetitious, but unfortunately they cannot be omitted.

Critics seem to agree as to which of Dryden's plays are essentially "heroic"; they implicitly limit his plays in this genre to The Indian Queen (1665), The Indian Emperor (1667), Tyrannic Love (1670), The Conquest of Granada (1672), and Aureng-Zebe (1676). George Saintsbury, for instance, says: "The Indian Emperor, Tyrannic Love, and the two Conquests of Granada form—for Aureng-Zebe, though strictly speaking a 'heroic' play, is apart from and above the kind—the main body of Dryden's contribution to that kind itself."<sup>1</sup> All for Love is considered to be a break away from the "heroic" play; and it is implied that after this approximate period of ten years (1665-1676), Dryden did not write heroic plays.

Though, as was shown in the introduction, no conclusive definition

of the heroic play has yet been offered, since critics are still not in agreement as to what constitutes a heroic tragedy, it will be convenient in the first part of this study, to follow chronologically the list offered by G. Saintsbury. A summary of the plot of each of these plays will be attempted, with emphasis on the hero's actions, and a special effort not to make an a priori distinction between good and bad characters. It is hoped that through these summaries the main characteristics of the "heroic" hero will make themselves plain; a delineation of the archetype of the hero will follow, and an interpretation of that type will be offered.

### The Indian Queen<sup>2</sup>

Montezuma, general of the Inca of Peru, has just won for him a battle over the Mexicans. The Inca gives him Acacis, prince of the Mexicans, in partial reward, and bids him ask for anything else he wants. Montezuma demands nothing less than the Inca's daughter, Orazia:

I beg not Empires, those my Sword can gain;  
 But for my past and future Service too,  
 What I have done, and what I mean to do;  
 For this of Mexico which I have won,  
 And Kingdoms I will conquer yet unknown;  
 I only ask for fair Orazia's Eyes  
 To reap the fruits of all my victories. (I,i)

Since Montezuma is only a commoner, the Inca is angry but controls his anger and answers: "That Gift's too high." He offers kingdoms instead; but Montezuma proudly answers, "Thou giv'st me only what

before I gave. Give me thy daughter." Outraged, the Ynca banishes him and leaves. Montezuma is about to dash after the Ynca to kill him when he is stopped by his prisoner, Acacis:

No, I must your Rage prevent,  
From doing what your Reason wou'd repent;  
Like the vast Seas, your mind no limit knows,  
Like them lies upon to each Wind that blows."

Montezuma: Can a Revenge that is so just, be ill?

Acacis: It is Orazia's father you wou'd kill.  
Compose these wilde Distempers in your breast;  
Anger, like madness, is appeas'd by rest. (I,1)

Montezuma agrees not to kill the Ynca but says that he will carry his might to the conquered side and humiliate him. Acacis upbraids him again: "Your honor is obliged to keep your trust... subjects to Kings should more obedience pay." However, Montezuma does not consider himself a subject: "Subjects are bound, not strangers to obey." (I, 1)

Already Montezuma's character is fairly well delineated. He is valorous but rash and too proud, subject to a low passion like anger. He, however, does not rebel against the Ynca; he believes that subjects should obey their kings whatever the circumstances, but since he is a stranger, he feels free to offer his services to whom he pleases. Though he does not feel that he is bound in these present circumstances, Montezuma does not reject all bonds.

He offers Acacis his freedom which Acacis turns down on the grounds that Montezuma has no right to bestow it: "He gave me to his general not to his foe." Acacis will remain prisoner and though he

will not fight against his own people, he will try to protect the life of Orazia and the Ynca; meanwhile he protects Montezuma's flight. Unquestionably Acacis is a man of honor, acts according to honor, whatever meaning that word held for Dryden and Restoration audiences. Undoubtedly, also, Acacis seems to link honor and reason. Montezuma fails to do what is honorable because his reason is blinded by his passion (rage).

Zempoalla, usurping queen of Mexico, and Traxalla, her general, are mourning their losses, when they are told that Acacis lives and that a "god-like" stranger is fighting on their side, bringing them victory.

The two armies fight and Orazia and Ynca are made prisoners. Montezuma enters, drives away their guards and utters these revealing two lines: "How different is my fate, from theirs, whose Fame / From Conquest grows! from Conquest grows my Shame." Montezuma knows his acts were wrong and tells the Ynca: "T'were vain to own repentance, since I know / Thy scorn, which did my passions once despise, / Once more would make my swelling anger grow;" (II,1) he knows his own temper and how susceptible to anger it makes him; that he is in the wrong is made clear by what Orazia tells him:

O Montezuma, cou'd thy love engage  
Thy soul so little, or make banks so low  
About thy heart, that thy revenge and rage,  
Like suddain floods, so soon shou'd over-flow!  
Ye Gods, how much was I mistaken here!  
I thought you gentle as the gaulless Dove;  
But you as humorsome as Windes appear,  
And subject to more passions then your Love." (II,1)

That Montezuma himself considers Orazia's reproaches well founded is evidenced by his reply: "How have I been betrayed by guilty rage.... But I'll redeem myself...and yet make conquest...take a new flight to your now fainting side." Not only does he recognize his own shortcomings, but he is capable of appreciating a really noble character when he sees him, and pays tribute to Acacis' noble nature: "How gentle all this Prince's actions be! / Virtue is calm in him, but rough in me." (II,1)

These two characters, made of the same mettle, can only be friends:

Acacis: Can Montezuma place me in his breast?

Montezuma: My heart's not large enough for such a guest.

Acacis, of course, loves Orazia, but this is no cause for jealousy between the two friends: "Rivals with honor may together die." (II,1)

While attempting to free Orazia and the Ynca, Acacis and Montezuma are taken prisoners. Accused by his mother of having betrayed her, Acacis agrees: "It was my Honor made my duty erre. / I cou'd not see his prisoners forc'd away, / To whom I owed my life, and you the day." (III,1)

Zempoalla falls in love with Montezuma; it is love at first sight and she abandons herself to it: "'Tis love, 'tis love, that thus disorders me. / How pride and love tear my divided soul!" (III,1) Evidently this love is different from the one that exists between Montezuma and Orazia and that which Acacis feels for Orazia. When

Orazia tells Montezuma, "Could thy love engage thyself so little" in the above quoted citation, she means that his love should have made him obey reason and honor, and practically equates those three concepts. But when Zempoalla decides to pursue the satisfaction of her love at all cost, she herself equates it with a low physical need and gives it a physical and not spiritual emphasis:

I must pursue my love—yet love enjoy'd,  
Will with esteem that caus'd it first grow less;  
But thirst and hunger fear not to be cloy'd,  
And when they be, are cured by their excess." (III,1)

It is a far cry from Acacia's: "I love Orazia, but a nobler way—then for my love my Honor to betray." (III,1)

If Zempoalla cannot understand that type of love, it is because she lacks ethical feeling:

Honor is but an itch in youthful blood  
Of doing acts extravagantly good;  
We call that Virtue, which is only heat  
That reigns in Youth, till age findes out the cheat."  
(III,1)

Zempoalla abandons herself to love, makes mistakes in judgment, does not think of her throne or the consequences of her acts; she wants Montezuma to love her and makes her priest summon different spirits to her help. Significantly, the answer she gets from the oracle is: "'Tis reason only can make passions less:" But Zempoalla will not heed the advice. If Ismeron and his spirits cannot make Montezuma burn for her: "Down go your Temples, and your Gods shall see / They have small use of their Divinity."

Traxalla, in love also with Orazia, wants her to yield to him and threatens to kill Montezuma, who offers his life instead of Orazia's.

Zempoalla dashes in and threatens to kill Orazia if Traxalla kills Montezuma. There is no way to solve the situation except for Traxalla and Zempoalla to decide to renounce their loves and put them to death; Montezuma and Orazia are led to prison.

Acacis delivers them, bids Orazia fly and stays behind with Montezuma. He has something to tell him: "That which my honor ow'd thee I have paid; / As honour was, so love must be obey'd." He wants to fight Montezuma, and the better man shall win the lady. Montezuma understands: "Thou hast perform'd what Honour bid thee do, / But Friendship bars what honor prompts me to. / Friends should not fight." He suggests that Orazia be allowed to decide, but Acacia answers: "Your greater merits bribe her to your side; / My weaker merits must by arms be try'd." Montezuma is torn between love and friendship: "O Tyrant Love, how cruel are thy laws! / I forfeit Friendship, or betray thy Cause." (IV, 1)

They fight, and Montezuma is winning when Zempoalla and Traxalla enter upon them. Orazia comes back and constitutes herself prisoner; everything is again as it was. Acacis, though bleeding, decides to live on and try once more to save his friends or die with them.

Montezuma, Orazia, and the Inca are in prison and Montezuma asks the Inca's forgiveness:

Since I must perish by my own success,  
Think my misfortunes more, my Crimes the less;  
And so forgiving make me pleas'd to dye,  
Thus punish'd for this guilty victory. (V,1)

But the Inca only scolds Orazia for loving Montezuma. She is torn

between her duty to her love and her duty to her father: "How love  
and nature may divide a breast, / At once by both their pow'rs  
severely pres'd." (V, 1)

Montezuma scorns Zempoalla's offers of love, though his life is  
at stake. She is the complete toy of her passions: "What shall I  
do? am I so quite forlorn, / No help from my own pride, nor from his  
scorn!" (V,1)

Acacis enters, very weak, and accuses Zempoalla and Traxalla of  
being cruel, ungrateful, traitors, and so on. Unable to obtain the  
prisoners' deliverance, Acacis stabs himself. Zempoalla is genuinely  
distressed: "He faints, help, help, some help, or he will bleed, /  
His life and mine away:" Montezuma is moved to tears: "Into my eyes  
sorrow begins to creep, / When hands are ty'd it is no shame to  
weep." (V, 1)

At this point the people led by the rightful Queen rebel; Zem-  
poalla is too crushed by her suffering for Acacis' death to fight back.  
The banished Queen is Montezuma's mother and the people call him their  
King. Zempoalla holds a dagger to his breast, but she cannot make her-  
self kill him and sets him free: "Now where is thy defence—against  
my love?" Montezuma kills Traxalla, but both Montezuma and Orazia  
forgive Zempoalla because she has delivered him; however, she refuses  
to live since Acacis is dead. She attains true grandeur in these last  
moments: "The greatest proof of courage we can give, / Is then to dye  
when we have power to live." (V, 1)

Montezuma and Orazia are joined and both have a parting tear for



Acacis.

The hero is undoubtedly Montezuma. He is valorous but rash and proud; a low passion like anger can make him forget his duty to his prince and to his love; he is perfectly aware of these duties, and does not question them; but his passions can overcome his reason and make him act rashly; he needs Acacis to check him and direct him. Yet, though swayed by passion, Montezuma is a noble character because he is aware of what honor requires him to do, and because eventually he surmounts his passions and acts rightly. Guided by reason he follows the right path.

Acacis is a perfect character, the embodiment of honor itself; he always knows which duty comes first and is so much in control of his passions that for him there is never a hard choice to make; in turn, he serves his friend, his love, his country whenever required. If what he does is hard for him to do, it is never apparent, and he is always unmistakably right, because always "cool" and guided by Reason. He is the ideal which Montezuma eventually attains through struggle against his passions.

Zempoalla, prey to her passions, cannot dominate them; her reason is of no help to her. She has no concept of the meaning of honor and can feel only low, physical love as opposed to the spiritual, elevating kind. The implication seems to be that when reason does not control the passions, these can only make a person low and base. The path to honor is through reason.

The Indian Emperor

Cortez and his men have come to the New World to help Taxallan  
vanquish Montezuma:

By noble ways we Conquest will prepare,  
First offer peace, and that refus'd, make war. (I,1)

Montezuma, in an exotic ceremonial, chooses Almeria, daughter of  
Zempoalla and Traxalla, for his bride. She scorns him because of the  
pain he inflicted upon her mother and father (The Indian Queen).

Montezuma insists:

My haughty mind no fate could ever bow,  
Yet I must stoop to one who scorns me now.  
Is there no pity to my sufferings due?

Odmar, his son, is shocked by Montezuma's submission to Almeria:  
"Can he hear this and not his Fetters break? / Is love so powerful or  
his soul so weak?" He tries to reason with his father: "In all I  
urge I keep my duty still, / Not rule your reason, but instruct your  
will."

Orbellan, Almeria's brother, argues with Almeria and tries to  
convince her to marry Montezuma so that he may gain Montezuma's  
daughter Cydaria. Almeria agrees to go along but only in order to  
make Montezuma suffer.

I take this Garland, not as given by you,  
But as my merit, and my beauties due.  
As for the Crown that you, my slave, possess  
To share it with you would but make me less. (I,11)

Guyomar, Montezuma's younger son, enters with news of the Spanish  
landing, Odmar is urged by Montezuma to choose his love; he places

the garland on Alibech, Almeria's sister. Since Guyomar loves her also, the brothers quarrel.

Orbellan asks for Cydaria; Montezuma does not refuse because he loves Almeria:

Whither is all my former fury gone?  
Once more I have Traxalla's chains put on,  
And by his Children am in triumph led....  
My Lyon-heart is with Loves toyls beset,  
Struggling I fall still deeper in the net. (I,ii)

The Indians of Taxallan do not heed Cortez's intention of first offering peace; they fall on the Mexicans, who are about to be made prisoners when Cortez stops the fighting, calling the aggressors traitors. "Know I protect them and they shall not dye." Montezuma thinks the Spaniards are gods, but Cortez sets him right. Asked to surrender his power, Montezuma answers:

Your gods I slight not, but will keep my own.  
My Crown is absolute, and holds of none,  
I cannot in a base subjection live,  
Nor suffer you to take, though I would give. (I,ii)

Cortez has fallen in love with Cydaria and she with him.

Montezuma goes to the magicians' cave to learn of the future. He is given one bad and one rather good prophecy, but he doesn't really care about his throne:

But of my Crown thou too much care do'st take,  
That which I value more, my Love's at stake. (II,i)

Cydaria goes with Alibech to urge Cortez not to fight. His answer is that he must because he has to obey his Prince's orders:

Cortez: Command my Life, and I will soon obey,  
To save my Honour I my Blood will pay.

Cydaria: What is this Honour which does Love Controul?

Cortez:     A raging Fit of Vertue in the Soul;  
               A painful burden, which great minds must bear,  
               Obtain'd with danger, and possess'd with fear. (II,ii)

Nevertheless, Cortez agrees to wait twenty-four hours before starting the fight: "I till tomorrow will the fight delay. / Remember you have conquer'd me today." Alibech very perceptively tells him: "This grant destroys all you have urg'd before. / Honour could not give this, or can give more."

Cydaria informs him that she will not draw an arrow in the fight for fear of killing him; her generosity overwhelms him:

No more, your Kindness wounds me to the death.  
 Honour, be gone, what art thou but a breath?  
 I'll live, proud of my infamy and shame,  
 Brac'd with no Triumph but a Lover's same;  
 Man can but say Love did his reason blind,  
 And Love's the noblest frailty of the mind. (II,ii)

But Pizarro, his general, enters to tell him that the battle has already started, and it is too late to stop it.

Odmар and Guyomar ask Alibech to choose between them; though she loves one of them, she withholds his name; her intention is to belong to the one who will do most for his country.

Montezuma and Alibech are taken prisoners. Guyomar and Odmар go to free them.

Guyomar:     Their danger is alike, whom shall I free?

Odmар:       I'll follow Love.

Guyomar:     I'll follow Piety.  
               Fly, Sir, while I give back that life you gave  
               Mine is well lost, if I your life can save. (II,ii)

Montezuma goes free but Guyomar is taken prisoner. Cortez, however, comes in time to free him, in order for him to offer once

more a conditional peace to Montezuma; Guyomar and Cortez, by this act, become fast friends, and call each other "brother."

Guyomar and Odmar again ask for Alibech's preference. Odmar accuses Guyomar of having saved the King rather than her. To this charge, Guyomar answers:

In acting what my Duty did require,  
'Twas hard for me to quit my own desire,  
That Fought for her which when I did subdue,  
'Twas much the easier task I left for you.

But Alibech still does not make up her mind:

Odmar a more than common Love has shown  
And Guyomar's was greater, or was none. (III,1)

Montezuma asks for advice from his family: should he accept the conditional peace offered, or keep on fighting? Everyone is for war except Guyomar. Almeria, in secret, urges her brother to murder Cortez. When Guyomar overhears them, he is distressed:

I wish him dead—but cannot wish it so.  
Either my country never must be freed,  
Or I consenting to so black a deed.

He makes up his mind, however: "He gave me freedom, I'll prevent his fate." (III,1)

Orbellan sets out to find Cortez but loses his way among the Spanish tents and is pursued; pretending to be a Taxallan, he is saved by Cortez—who, however, eventually recognizes him as his rival. He gives him a sword to fight it out, but Orbellan is wounded in the hand and Cortez refuses to exploit his advantage and kill him. But, in spite of Cortez's noble behaviour toward him, Orbellan cannot promise to give up Cydaria because he is the slave of his love:

To swear I would resign her were but vain,  
Love would recal that perjur'd breath again.

Cortez: In spite of that I give thee Liberty,  
And with thy person leave thy honour free. (III,11)

The Mexicans are surrounded by enemies and famine is spreading.

Alibech begs Montezuma to pity Cydaria and not force her to marry Orbellan, but Almeria urges the contrary. While Guyomar and Odmar go out to meet the assailants, Cortez enters and slays Orbellan. However, Guyomar and Odmar come back and make him prisoner. Almeria asks Montezuma to revenge Orbellan's death in return for her favors:

"Either command his Death upon the place, / Or never more behold Almeria's face." But Guyomar intercedes for Cortez: "You by his Valour, once from Death were freed. / Can you forget so Generous a Deed?" (III,111)

Montezuma, torn between honor and love, cannot make up his mind. Seeing his indecision, Guyomar decides to take the matter into his own hands, and as he was the one who took Cortez's sword in the first place, he considers him as his prisoner, and restores his sword to him:

Approach who dares: he yielded on my word;  
And as my Pris'ner, I restore his Sword;  
His Life concerns the safety of the State,  
And I'll preserve it for a calm debate.

Montezuma, considering this act as rebellion, wants to kill him.

Odmar steps in:

My Brother's blood I cannot see you spill,  
Since he prevents you but from doing ill:  
He is my Rival, but his Death would be  
For him too glorious, and too base for me.

Guyomar:     Thou shalt not conquer in this noble strife:  
                   Alas, I meant not to defend my Life;  
                   Strike, Sir, you never pierc'd a Breast more True  
                   'Tis the last Wound I e're can take for you.

Cortez, to solve the situation, offers to kill himself. Montezuma agrees to defer the sentence two days in the hope that Almeria will relent, and he concludes on these lines: "Then all who shall my head-long passion see, / Shall curse my Crimes, and yet shall pity me." (III,iii)

Cortez is in prison. Almeria enters to kill him, but at the last moment, she discovers she cannot; she quickly perceives the reason and tells herself:

Plead not a Charm, or any gods command,  
 Alas, it is thy heart that holds thy hand;  
 In spite of me I love, and see too late  
 My Mothers' Pride must find my Mothers' Fate.

She ends up by telling Cortez she loves him. Very gallantly he takes it as if in jest, and assures her he can only love Cydaria:

Yet could I change, as sure I never can,  
 How could you Love so Infamous a Man? (IV,i)

The situation of the Mexicans is desperate, but rather than live in bondage, Montezuma and his sons decide to fight to death. However, Alibech tries to reason with Guyomar: "What hope you from this Sally you prepare?" Guyomar: "A Death, with Honour for my Countries good." Alibech really wants him to ask Cortez for an honorable truce. Guyomar cannot believe what he hears:

What I have heard I blush to hear: and grieve  
 Those words you spoke, I must your words believe.

He refuses to "sell" his country:

No, Madam, no, I never can commit  
 A deed so ill, nor can you suffer it:  
 'Tis but to try what Vertue you can find  
 Lodg'd in my Soul.

Alibech, however, does mean it: "But vertue you too scrupulously serve." Above all, she wants to save the town, but Guyomar cannot understand her point of view which seems rebellious to him. Understandably Alibech accuses him of not loving her enough:

In all debates you plainly let me see  
 You love your Vertue best, but Odmar me.

She asks him to forget her from now on. Even under this threat, Guyomar does not waver:

But though from Vertues rules I cannot part,  
 Think I deny you with a Bleeding Heart....  
 But in this streight, to Honour I'll be true,  
 And leave my Fortune to the Gods and you. (IV,ii)

Just as Guyomar leaves, Odmar enters and Alibech asks the same thing of him. He obeys readily: "I'll not my Shame nor your Command dispute: / You shall behold your Empire's Absolute." He leaves to carry out her commands. Alibech does not know what to think, but her instinct tells her that:

My inward choice was Guyomar before,  
 But now his Vertue has confirm'd me more. (IV,ii)

Guyomar, in spite of the odds against him, succeeds in defeating the Spaniards and taking them prisoners. In recompense, Montezuma gives him Alibech for his wife which puts Odmar beside himself with jealousy.

I feel a strange Temptation in my will  
 To do an action, great at once and ill:  
 Vertue ill treated, from my Soul is fled;



I by Revenge and Love am wholly led...  
 Sink Empire, Father Perish, Brother Fall,  
 Revenge does more then recompense you all. (IV,iii)

He turns traitor and sets the Spanish prisoners free on the condition that they help him seize Alibech.

Almeria once more declares her love to Cortez. She will deliver him so that he can choose between her and Cydaria. He thanks her and is kissing her hand when Cydaria sees them and is seized by jealousy. Almeria takes advantage of the situation and acts as if Cortez had proposed to her. At this point Cortez is rescued, but when Almeria sees him out of her power, she rushes to kill Cydaria. When Cortez steps in front of Cydaria to protect her, Almeria stabs and hurts him. She immediately repents: "What have I done? I see his blood appear," and is about to stab herself when he stops her. He then goes out to join his army, leaving Cydaria in the care of his general, Pizarro. Almeria abandons herself to despair:

Night and Despair my Fatal Foot-steps guide;  
 That Chance may give the Death which he deny'd. (IV,iv)

Guyomar and Alibech have been taken prisoners by Odmar. When Alibech scorns his renewed proposals, Odmar replies: "But know, I either must enjoy or kill." Guyomar and Alibech are both willing to die to save their honor; however, Odmar threatens Alibech with Guyomar's death. Her own death she can face but not Guyomar's, so she yields; when she goes to give Guyomar a last kiss, he turns from her and accuses her of being false:

Alibech: Since there remains no other means to try,  
 Think I am false; I cannot see you Dye.

Guyomar: To give for me both Life and Honour too,  
Is more, perhaps, then I could give for you.

They decide to die together. Seeing he cannot convince her any other way, Odmar has Alibech bound and is about to "have his will" when Vasquez, the Spanish captain with whom Odmar had made an alliance, bursts in, and frees Alibech! He had meant her to be his:

This Lady I did for my self design.  
Dare you attempt her Honour who is mine?

While Odmar and Vasquez fight over her, Alibech unbinds Guyomar. Vasquez kills Odmar and Guyomar, seizing Odmar's sword, kills Vasquez. Immediately, Guyomar thinks of his duty and leaving Alibech, runs to his father's aid:

This is a Night of Horror not of Love...  
I'll to my Father's Aid and Countries flye,  
And succour both, or in their Ruine Dye. (V,i)

Montezuma is being tortured by a Christian Priest and Pizarro. He conducts himself nobly. When Cortez enters, he weeps at the sight, calling Montezuma "Father." However, Guyomar is winning and Cortez has to leave and help his own men fight him back. Almeria persuades Montezuma to take refuge at Cydaria's who is under Pizarro's protection in a fort belonging to the Spaniards. Assailed by Cortez, Montezuma kills himself. Almeria holds a dagger to Cydaria and threatens Cortez with her death. He is helpless. Almeria stabs Cydaria, then herself, but apparently Cydaria's wound is light. Almeria finally repents and joins Cydaria's and Cortez's hands. Victorious, Cortez sets Guyomar and Alibech free and offers to share his victory with Guyomar, but his offer is turned down. "Those gifts

I cannot with my Honour take," says Guyomar; with Alibech he will go far away to where "Love and Freedom we'll in Peace enjoy." (V,ii)

In this play it is rather difficult to pinpoint the hero. Though the play is called after Montezuma, The Indian Emperor, he certainly is no more the hero than Zempoalla was the Heroine in The Indian Queen. Montezuma is portrayed as essentially noble but made base, and an object of pity through his abject love of Almeria; his is not a noble love, since his reason tells him he should fight it, and he cannot. He does not eventually overcome his weakness or vice and does not grow into a better man; he certainly is not a hero, because he remains a slave to his passions. Furthermore, his part is rather short, both in number of lines and in the part he takes in the action.

Both Guyomar and Cortez could each be the hero. They both win the battles they fight; they both have undoubtedly noble natures, but with a difference.

Cortez is brave in battle, fearless of death. He knows his duty to his King (he must conquer the Mexicans in spite of Cydaria), to his love (Almeria cannot make him forget Cydaria), to friendship (he frees Guyomar whenever he can), to honor (he will not take advantage of Orbellan). Like all noble natures he is extremely generous, to friend and foe alike. The one flaw in his behavior is his submitting to Cydaria's prayers, and promising to stop the fight for twenty-four hours, in spite of what he owed to his King; for a few moments he abandons himself to love rather than follow the dicta of honor: "Honor be gone, what art thou but a breath." However, fortune is

kindly to him and his men are already fighting so that he cannot stop them.

As to Guyomar, he is faultless; not one blemish can be detected in him. Though brave, he is never rash; though a lover he is never subject to his passion. His essential characteristic is that he always knows what he is supposed to do according to the laws of honor, and does it. The one time he seems to hesitate as to what course to take, he does not hesitate for long: though Cortez is enemy to his country, he cannot let him be murdered. When he has to save either his father or his lover, he saves his father. He captures Cortez, but will not allow him to be mistreated and constitutes himself his protector. When asked by Alibech to beg Cortez's leniency, he is outraged and would rather lose his love than act basely: he will not save his country at the price of honor. If Cortez is the hero of the play, Guyomar is the perfect heroic hero. Always in control of his passions, his reason is his guide to true honor.

Odmar is an interesting character. There is not much at the start to distinguish him from Guyomar, and he is the first to deplore his father's enslavement by Almeria. His love for Alibech seems to be as noble and as respectful as Guyomar's and probably is. His first sign of weakness is his choice to save Alibech, his love, rather than his father. We know then that he is more subject to his passions than Guyomar. He himself admits there is nothing he can do to check his love. Everything was under control as long as

he hoped to obtain Alibech; he even stops his father from killing Guyomar. But when he loses Alibech, he abandons himself entirely to his passions, not just love, but anger and desire for revenge, and he becomes a traitor to his country. Significantly, the quality of his love for Alibech changes; it immediately takes a physical turn and does not any more prompt him to glorious deeds of war and valour. He cares for nothing but the physical possession of Alibech and is about to rape her when she is saved by the Spaniards. Furthermore, he is perfectly conscious of his own degradation: "Virtue, ill treated, from my soul is fled." When passion and not reason is in complete possession of the field, there is no sense of honor left.

What tilts the scales in favor of Guyomar for hero is the personality of Alibech, his lover. Cydaria is the weaker soul and does little more than whimper during the whole play. But Alibech has the soul of a heroine: she will control her love and give herself to whoever will serve his country best, which is no less than what Guyomar does. When she urges him to ask leniency from Cortez, it is still of her country she is thinking; in her soul she knows he is right. Also, rather than betray her love, she chooses to die.

Almeria is a slave to her passions: revenge for her mother, pride in her beauty, lust for Cortez; whenever she acts, she has to act basely. Though she is as patriotic as Alibech, her means of winning is to have Cortez murdered. She is such a slave to her love that she can only bring destruction to herself. Her only moment of grandeur is when she surmounts her jealousy, and dying, unites

Cydaria and Cortez. Once passions are under control, a character acts according to honor.

### Tyrranic Love

Maximin, Tyrant of Rome, is having trouble keeping the Romans well in hand. In this first scene he is presented as a commanding man of quick decision: there is no extravagant portraiture of his valour or tyranny at this point. To his aide comes Porphyrius, a captain of his, whom he had made praetor of Egypt. The portrait of Porphyrius is the one usually reserved for the heroic hero; Maximin praises him in the following manner:

It well becomes the conduct and the care  
Of one so fam'd and fortunate in War.

Albinus, a tribune, warns Charinus, Maximin's son:

This new pretender will all pow'r ingross.  
All things must now by his direction move;  
And you, Sir, must resign your Father's love.

Charinus agrees:

Yes; every name to his reputemust bow;  
There grow no Bays for any other brow.  
He blasts my early Honour in the bud,  
Like some tall Tree, the Monster of the Wood. (I,1)

Charinus wants to equal Porphyrius' worth and goes out to fight.

Maximin welcomes Porphyrius warmly: "Welcome as what thou bring'st me, Victory!" Porphyrius' reply immediately discloses the man of honor; he is all humility:

That waits, Sir, on your Arms, and not on me.  
You left a Conquest more than half atchiev'd,  
And for whose easiness I almost grievd.

Porphyrius is bringing with him, as prisoner of war, St. Catherine. Maximin's wife, Berenice, and his daughter, Valeria, enter, and we learn that Porphyrius loves Berenice:

What dangers in these charming Eyes appear!  
How my old wounds are open'd at this view!  
And in my murd'ers presence bleed anew!

Berenice knows he loves her; she also loves him:

How dangerous are these extasies of Love!  
He shews his passion to a thousand Eyes!  
He cannot stir, nor can I bid him rise.  
That word my heart refuses to my tongue. (I,i)

But Valeria loves Porphyrius also; she over-praises him, which makes Porphyrius become aware of her love. At this point Albinus enters with Charinus' body; Maximin raves:

Some God now, if he dares, relate what's past!  
Say but he's dead, that God shall mortal be.

Maximin orders Albinus to die along with all who fought with Charinus, to punish them for not having protected him better.

Berenice intercedes for Albinus, unsuccessfully. Maximin rejects her plea:

I have said:  
And will not be entreated, but obeyd.  
But, Empress, whence does your compassion grow?

Berenice: You need not ask it, since my birth you know  
The race of Antonin's was nam'd the Good:  
I draw my pity from my Royal Blood.

Apparently this was not the right thing to say:

Maximin: Still must I be upbraided with your line?

There appears to be very little tender feeling between Maximin and Berenice, since he killed her brother:

My Brother gave me to thee for a Wife,  
And for my Dowry thou didst take his life.

Berenice points to Charinus' body: "See the reward of all thy wicked care." And she delivers the last stroke:

For me; no other happiness I owe  
Than to have born no Issue to thy Throne.

Maximin: Provoke my rage no farther, lest I be  
Revengd at once upon the Gods and thee.

Porphyrius is outraged:

What horrid Tortures seize my laboring mind!  
O, only excellent of all thy kind!  
To hear thee threatned, while I idle stand!  
Heaven! was I born to fear a Tyrant's hand? [Aside]

Maximin dismisses Berenice: "Hence from my sight." Porphyrius does  
what is manly and honorable:

Let baser Souls from falling Fortunes fly:  
I'll pay my duty to her, though I dye.

He goes out with Berenice. (I,1)

Maximin is puzzled by this behavior but Valeria waves away his suspicions by assuring him that Porphyrius followed Berenice to quiet her down, so that she will not foment rebellion among the troops who love her very much. Maximin commends Porphyrius: "I ever thought him loyal as he's wise." To bind Porphyrius to his throne, he decides to marry him to Valeria who is elated at the prospect. But Placidius, an officer who has Maximin's trust, is crushed; he loves Valeria also.  
(I,1)

Berenice and Porphyrius are discussing their love. They had exchanged vows before Berenice's brother made her marry Maximin. Porphyrius wants her to be faithful to those vows and leave Maximin.



But Berenice is all duty and honor:

Whatever Maximin has been, or is,  
I am to bear, since Heav'n has made me his.

She encourages Porphyrius to be faithful to Maximin:

We both are bound by trust, and must be true;  
I to his Bed, and to his Empire you.

She allows him to love her silently, however: "Hope in heaven, not me." Porphyrius still argues but Berenice will not listen:

Love blinds my Vertue:—If I longer stay  
It will grow dark, and I shall lose my way.

Porphyrius is finally convinced, asks for only one compensation for his pains: "One kiss from this fair hand can be no sin." He accepts his doom: "I ask not that you gave to Maximin." (II,1)

Maximin nearly surprises the lovers; he comes to tell Porphyrius he is choosing him as successor. Porphyrius is not happy at the prospect:

With what misfortunes Heav'n torments me still!  
Why must I be oblig'd to one so ill?

Maximin offers him his daughter in the bargain and is surprised at Porphyrius' lack of enthusiasm. The latter apologizes on the grounds that he is overwhelmed by Maximin's generosity and asks to retire in order to "gather strength to bear so great a grace." (I,11)

Valerius, a tribune of the army, comes in bearing the news that the Christian princess is converting, by rational argument, learned philosophers to the new faith, and that the soldiers are singing her praises. Maximin makes St. Catherine appear before him. He is struck by her beauty. She disputes with Apollonius, the head priest, and

makes a Christian of him: "And with that truth that faith I will embrace." He is borne to the stakes like a martyr shouting the praise of St. Catherine. Maximin falls in love with St. Catherine: "I love: and am asham'd it should be seen." (II,1)

Maximin is in the power of his love for St. Catherine:

My love shoots up in tempests, as the Earth  
Is stirr'd and loosen'd in a blustering wind,  
Whose blasts to waiting flowers her womb unbind.  
(III,1)

Placidius tries to court St. Catherine for Maximin. Of course, she is unmovable, though Maximin pursues her relentlessly and cannot understand why she will not have him.

For what a greater happiness can be,  
Than to be courted and be lov'd by me?

But St. Catherine has only scorn for him:

I take myself from thy detested sight!

Maximin cannot control himself; he would like to kill her but loves her too much: "Wild with my rage, more wild with my desire." He decides to divorce Berenice and make St. Catherine his wife, and asks Porphyrius to help him. Porphyrius is indignant:

Neither the Gods nor man will give consent  
To put in practice your unjust intent.  
(III,1)

Valeria declares her love to Porphyrius. He tries to evade the issue but finally admits he loves someone else. Valeria swears revenge. But when Porphyrius assures her she will be revenged enough when he shall tell Maximin he refuses to marry her, Valeria loves him too much to bear his death and decides to save him:

I'll show that I deserve him more than she.  
 And if, at last, he does ingrateful prove,  
 My constancy it self rewards my Love. (III,1)

Porphyrius has made up his mind to reject all ties with Maximin:

Here Empire stands, if I could Love displace;  
 There, hopeless Love, with more Imperial Grace.  
 Thus, as a sinking Hero, compass'd round,  
 Beckens his bravest Foe for his last wound,  
 And him into his part of Fame does call,  
 I'll turn my Face to Love, and there I'll fall. (III,1)

Just when he has made this resolution, Berenice walks in, congratulates him on his change of fortune and gives him leave to marry Valeria; Porphyrius is driven to despair by her irony: "I feel your scorn cold as the hand of death." But Berenice does not spare him:

You'll come to Life in your Valeria's arms!  
 'Tis true, I cannot boast of equal charms.

The lovers tear at each other until Berenice is finally convinced that Porphyrius will die for her if need be; only then does she relent:

I love you now so well--That you shall die  
 Die mine! 'tis all I can with honour give.

Porphyrius asks only that she live. He discloses Maximin's intention of getting a divorce; only, she must ask for it so that the troops who love her will not rebel; otherwise she dies. Berenice is outraged:

I hate this Tyrant, and his bed I loath;  
 But, once submitting, I am ty'd to both.

The vow she made to Maximin is sacred and she cannot break it; she would rather die:

My earthly part,  
 Which is my tyrant's right, death will remove;  
 I'll come all soul and spirit to your love.

And when Porphyrius is dead also:

Then, Turtle-like, I'll to my mate repair  
And teach you your first flight in open air.

She leaves him on this hopeful note. Porphyrius can only admire her: "She has but done what honour did require." However, he will try to do his utmost to save her; if unsuccessful, he will die defending her.

But if, overpower'd, I must be overcome,  
Forced back, I'll fight each inch into my Tomb.

Maximin, told of Berenice's refusal to divorce him, has made up his mind to kill her. In the meantime he wants to marry Valeria to Porphyrius. To save Porphyrius, Valeria refuses, pretending that he is beneath her. She is thrown in prison until she makes up her mind to accept Porphyrius, who is overwhelmed by her generosity but who also wants to stay alive to save Berenice. (IV,1)

Maximin once more tries his luck with St. Catherine. She rejects him, telling him he should curb his passions and love only Berenice. This point of view Maximin cannot accept:

I can no more make passion come or go,  
Than you can bid your Nilus ebb or flow. (IV,1)

Berenice comes in and declares herself a convert to Christianity. St. Catherine commends her:

O, happy Queen whom pow'r leads not astray,  
Nor youth's more powerful blandishments betray.

Maximin seizes the opportunity and imprisons and condemns Berenice to death as a Christian heretic. As she is led away by Valerius, Porphyrius enters in time to take her defense: "Villain, hold off thy sacrilegious hands." He delivers her and tells her

that the praetorian bands are ready to fight for her, but he loses hope when told of her recent conversion: "The soldiers will not for a Christian fight." However, he thinks of arranging for St. Catherine to escape; this way Maximin would soon forget her and not go on with his plan of having Berenice executed. But this is too much to ask from St. Catherine: "Going, my crown of martyrdom I lose." Porphyrius and Berenice beg in vain; St. Catherine must be a martyr; she owes it to heaven. (IV,i)

Porphyrius has only one recourse left: kill Maximin. But Berenice cannot condone this dishonorable act:

If I a Tyrant did detest before,  
I hate a Rebel, and a Traitor more.

Outraged she goes out as Valerius's prisoner and once more Porphyrius agrees with her:

'Tis true, what she has often urg'd before,  
He's both my Father, and my Emperour!  
O honour, how canst thou invent a way  
To save my Queen, and not my trust betray!  
Unhappy I, that e're he trusted me!  
As well his Guardian-Angel may his murderer be. (IV,i)

But Porphyrius is unwilling to let Berenice die, and when he sees Maximin next, he quarrels with him and renounces his succession:

But your succession I renounce this hour.  
Upon a bloody Throne I will not sit;  
Nor share the guilt of Crimes which you commit.

He is ready to accept the full consequences of his action.

Maximin: If you are not my Caesar, you must dye.

Porphyrius: I take it as a nobler Destiny.

He is made prisoner and entrusted to Placidius. (IV,i)

But Valeria cannot let Porphyrius die. She argues with Placidius and promises him her hand in return for Porphyrius' freedom. Porphyrius, overwhelmed by her generosity, refuses at first. Then urged on, he accepts:

Though to my former vows I must be true,  
I'll ever keep one Love entire for you.  
That Love, which Brothers with chaste Sisters make.  
(V,1)

In the meantime Felicia, St. Catherine's mother, is brought in to her daughter's presence. St. Catherine apparently loves her mother greatly, but faced by a choice of either accepting Maximin's love or letting her mother die, she chooses the second alternative. Even her mother's begging does not change her determination. Maximin is beyond himself with rage and orders both mother and daughter executed. He changes his mind shortly after, but it is too late; they are dead. Maximin kills Valerius for obeying his orders, and for diversion, to forget his pain, he will have Berenice executed immediately. Porphyrius and Albinus are disguised as Moors and stand by her scaffold. As Maximin gives the order to behead Berenice, Porphyrius and Albinus approach to kill him, but he is warned in time by Berenice herself. Porphyrius is unmasked and at the accusation of being a traitor, he replies:

Know, Tyrant, I can bear that name,  
Rather than Son, and bear it with less shame.

Both Berenice and Porphyrius must die; their farewell is so pathetic that even Maximin is moved:

From my full eyes fond tears begin to start;  
Dispatch, they practise treason on my Heart.

But Valeria enters, begs her father to save Porphyrius and on his refusal stabs herself. Placidius, wild with pain, revenges her by stabbing Maximin, who, before dying, kills Placidius. (V,i)

The troops want Porphyrius for their emperor; but Porphyrius does not accept.

Too much, my Country men, your Love you show,  
That you have thought me worthy to be so.  
But, to requite that Love, I must take Care,  
Not to engage you in a Civil War.  
Two emperours at Rome the senate chose,  
And whom they chuse, no Roman should oppose.

Porphyrius will be happy only in Berenice's love, not forgetting however to mourn, once a week, Valeria's death. (V,i)

Here again questions have been raised as to who is the hero of the play. Maximin has a rather large part and his actions contribute to the progress of the plot. We are told he is or rather has been brave in battle, but he does not actually fight and win a battle during the course of the play; the main feature of this character is that he is a slave to his passions: lustful love, wild anger, cruelty and pride. His ranting is nothing else than the expression of his surrender to his passions. His actions can only bring about his own doom. Having none of the "heroical" virtues, Maximin cannot be the hero. We can arrive at this conclusion even without Dryden's assurances: "The part of Maximin, against which these holy Criticks so much declaim, was designed by me to set off the Character of St. Catherine....Have I proposed him as a pattern to be imitated, whom even for his impiety to his false Gods, I have so severely punish'd?"<sup>3</sup>

Neither is St. Catherine the heroine of the play: her part is very short, and she does practically nothing to advance the plot. She is a saint; her business is with heaven and not earth, and she makes this clear to Berenice and Porphyrius; her terms are not theirs; actually the "heroical" thing for her to do would have been to renounce her "crown of martyrdom" in order to save Berenice's life. The only interesting trait about her is that she converts people through discussion, convincing them, by the means of reason, of their errors.

The real "heroic" plot is the Berenice-Porphyrius plot rather than the Maximin-St. Catherine plot. Porphyrius, right from the start, is presented as a hero: a brave leader of men whom victory accompanies wherever he goes. He is aware of the multiple duties imposed on him by honor: duty to his emperor, to his love, to those who have won his gratitude (Valeria, for instance). His duty to his emperor is complicated by the fact that that emperor is a bloody tyrant. Even so, he rebels against him only after having severed all ties with him and because of a greater duty, that of saving the unjustly condemned Berenice from death. Whatever his actions, he never thinks of himself but of others. He asks Berenice to reward his love only once and is quickly convinced of his error. In spite of Maximin's actions, it takes him a long time to revolt, and his anger then is only a rightful one. He is a man who controls his passions; he consequently always acts according to the laws of honor.

Except for a small scene of jealousy, Berenice is the absolute pattern of virtue, reason, and honor. She loves Porphyrius and



loathes Maximin, but being his wife she will act her part as best she can whether he wants it or not, and to protect Maximin she even does her best to get Porphyrius killed. She is Porphyrius' conscience, and if he gives signs of relenting, she is there to remind him of his duties, of which he is very grateful.

Valeria is a generous and noble soul. Her one flaw is her passion for Porphyrius. Though her passion is noble and makes her accomplish generous things, it is still a flaw because it is too overwhelming: since Porphyrius does not love her, she should control her passion for him; she does not and is destroyed by its excess.

#### The Conquest of Granada (1st Part)<sup>4</sup>

Boabdelin, King of Granada, besieged by the Spaniards, tries to maintain order between his followers, the Abencerrages and the Zegrys, who want to fight it out. A stranger, who has already distinguished himself previously in bullfighting, joins with the Abencerrages against the Zegrys:

I cannot stay to ask which cause is best;  
But this is so to me, because opprest. (I,1)

Boabdelin tries to stop the fighting but is unsuccessful; Almanzor, the stranger, though surrounded by guards, kills his foe; he is made prisoner and Boabdelin decides he should die for disobeying his order to stop fighting, but Almanzor defies Boabdelin:

No man has more contempt than I of breath  
But whence hast thou the right to give me death?

Obeded as sovereign by thy subjects be,  
 But know, that I alone am king of me.  
 I am as free as nature first made man,  
 Ere the base laws of servitude began,  
 When wild in woods the noble savage ran.

He does not stop at that but tells Boabdelin that he is a bad king since he cannot keep order among his followers. Abdalla, Boabdelin's brother, comes in time to deliver Almanzor, discloses his identity, and tells Boabdelin:

From Africa I drew him to your aid,...  
 Vast in his courage, boundless in his mind,  
 Rough as a storm, and humorous as wind:  
 Honour's the only idol of his eyes;  
 The charms of beauty like a pest he flies;  
 And, raised by valour from a birth unknown,  
 Acknowledges no power above his own. (I,i)

Boabdelin apologizes to Almanzor who, by threats, makes the factions obey. The Duke of Arcos, King Ferdinand's envoy, comes to ask Boabdelin to give his allegiance to Ferdinand, but Boabdelin tries to argue, and Almanzor steps in and defies the Spaniards; they cannot win, since: "The Moors have heaven, and me, to assist their cause." (I,i)

The Moors have repelled the Spaniards. Almanzor has made the Duke of Arcos prisoner; he glories in his valor, and when the Duke of Arcos scorns his victory, Almanzor defies him:

But, since thou threaten'st us, I'll set thee free,  
 That I again may fight, and conquer thee.

He goes out to ask the Duke's freedom from the king. (II,i)

The Abencerrages and the Zegry have apparently made peace and Abdelmelech, chief of the Abencerrages is promised in marriage Lyndaraxa, sister of Zulema, chief of the Zegrys. However, Abdalla

is also in love with Lyndaraxa. When he proposes to her, her answer is that she loves Abdelmelech and will leave him only for a king.

For less than empire I'll not change my love...  
 Yes! I avow the ambition of my soul,  
 To be that one to live without control! (II,1)

Abdalla is torn by conflicting passions:

Betwixt my love and virtue I am tossed;  
 This must be forfeited, or that be lost.

He seeks help from Zulema, who prompts him to be king.

Abdalla: I hope you only would my honour try;  
 I'm loth to think you virtue's enemy.

When Zulema discards virtue as useless, Abdalla's answer is that:

Reason was given to curb our headstrong will.

Zulema: Reason's a staff for age, when nature's gone;  
 But youth is strong enough to walk alone.

Abdalla still argues:

In cursed ambition I no rest should find,  
 But must for ever lose my peace of mind.

But finally he yields.

No more!--I will usurp the royal seat;  
 Thou, who hast made me wicked, make me great.

They decide to seek Almanzor's help;

The king his prisoner's freedom has denied,  
 And that refusal has provoked his pride. (II,1)

Almanzor is enraged against Boabdalin because of that refusal.

He will not obey him: "The word, which I have given, shall stand like fate." When asked to join the rebellion, he accepts and gives his support to Abdalla for friendship's sake:

When for myself I fight, I weigh the case,  
 But friendship will admit of no such laws.

Abdelmelech tries to persuade Abdalla not to turn traitor, but Abdalla replies:

Your counsels, noble Abdelmelech, move  
My reason to accept them, not my love.  
Ah, why did heaven leave man so weak defence,  
To trust frail reason with the rule of sense....  
Love, like a lethargy, has seized my will....  
I'll love, be blind, be cozened till I die;

Abdelmelech admits that he probably would do the same for Lyndaraxa.

When she comes in, though he knows she is being unfaithful to her pledge, he nevertheless is led to ask her forgiveness for his jealousy of Abdalla. (III,i)

While the king is being entertained after exchanging vows with Almahide, the Alhambra is stormed by Almanzor and Abdalla, and the Abencerrages cannot resist. The men leave the ladies, Almanzor and the Zegrys enter upon them, leading Ozmyn, a brave Abencerrageo and brother to Almahide, prisoner.

Almahide pleads with Almanzor, and he at first sight falls in love with her:

I am pleased and pained, since first her eyes I saw....  
I fear it is the lethargy of love!  
'Tis he; I feel him now in every part:

He tries to be rude to Almahide but cannot.

I wonnot love you; give me back my heart;  
But give it, as you had it, fierce and brave.  
It was not made to be a woman's slave.

At Almahide's entreaty to protect her, Almanzor replies:

Who dare touch her I love? I'm all o'er love:  
Nay, I am love; Love shot, and shot so fast,  
He shot himself into my breast at last.

But Almahide will not let him love her:

Alas, it is in vain;  
Fate for each other did not us ordain.

Almanzor will not submit to fate, however:

You're his by promise, but you're mine by love...  
I love you better, with more zeal than he.

But Almahide is not convinced:

This day  
I gave my faith to him, he his to me.

Even Almanzor cannot discard Boabdelin's claim to Almahide. All he does is pray:

Good heaven...  
Give me that minute when she made her vow!

He seems to control himself eventually:

There's something noble labouring in my breast:  
This raging fire, which through the mass does move;  
Shall purge my dross, and shall refine my love.  
(III,1)

Almanzor, as recompense for his help, asks Almahide from Abdalla; it is only to set her free; this surprises Abdalla:

Your generosity I much approve;  
But your excess of that shows want of love.

Almanzor contradicts him:

No, 'tis the excess of love which mounts so high,  
That seen far off, it lessens to the eye.

However, Zulema loves Almahide also and claims her from Abdalla;

Almanzor is outraged:

She your reward! why, she's a gift so great,  
That I myself have not deserved her yet;

Zulema scorns Almanzor's kind of love:

Dream on, enjoy her soul, and set that free;  
I'm pleased her person should be left for me.

Abdalla, in danger of being abandoned by the Zegrys, asks Almanzor to desist. Almanzor of course will not and leaves Abdalla's cause:

Thou can'st no title to my duty bring;  
I'm not thy subject, and my soul's thy king.  
Farewell. (III,1)

Almanzor goes back to Boabdelin:

You were ungrateful, but your foes were more....  
Great souls by kindness only can be tied;...  
Honour is what myself, and friends, I owe; (IV,1)

In the meantime Lyndaraxa has complete control over both Abdelmelech and Abdalla, who, while he is gone to assault the Alhambra, has left her mistress of the Albayzyn, his fort. Her father, Selin, has Ozmyrn bound and wants to kill him in revenge of the death of his son, Tarifa, killed by Ozmyrn; he has his daughter, Benzayda, brought to witness the execution. But she loves Ozmyrn and pleads for his life:

He killed my brother in his own defence.  
Pity his youth, and spare his innocence.

Selin will have none of that, and orders her to kill Ozmyrn with her own hand or she herself will die. (IV,11)

But Abdalla has been forced back from the Alhambra and is calling for Selin's help. In Selin's absence Benzayda frees Ozmyrn. Abdalla is apparently vanquished, since Almanzor and his party enter the Albayzyn. Once more Almanzor sets Almahide free, and she is very grateful.

You bound and freed me; but the difference is,  
That showed your valour; but your virtue this.

Yet, Almanzor wants her love.

Almahide: You ask with threatening, like a begging thief.—  
Once more, Almanzor, tell me, am I free?

Almanzor: Madam, you are, from all the world,—but me!—

He tells her he will pursue her, always.

Almahide: I can no longer bear to be accused,  
As if what I could grant you, I refused.  
My father's choice I never will dispute;

She is kind enough, however, to intimate that had she been free, she would have loved him. She will obey her father; all Almanzor has to do is get his consent. She knows, however, that this is impossible; not so Almanzor:

No; there is a necessity in fate,  
Why still the brave bold man is fortunate:  
He keeps his object ever full in sight,  
And that assurance holds him firm and right.

Almahide admires him, yet with reservations:

Might I not make it as my last request,—  
...  
That you would somewhat of your fierceness hide—  
That inborn fire—I do not call it pride? (IV,ii)

Beaten, Abdalla is refused shelter in the Albayzyn by Lyndaraxa, and he joins the Spaniards. Abenamar, Ozmyn's father, when told of Benzayda's identity forbids his son to have anything to do with her. Ozmyn cannot obey him:

Nature, that bids us parents to obey,  
Bids parents their commands by reason weigh.

Both children decide to run away. (V,i)

Almanzor brings Almahide back to Abenamar and Boabdelin.

Boabdelin promises him what he wants for recompense. Of course,

Almanzor asks for Almahide. Boabdelin, of course, refuses and has him imprisoned and condemned to death. Almahide rebels at his ingratitude:

Did he my freedom to his life prefer,  
And shall I wed Almanzor's murderer?

The king by refusing Almanzor's request has broken his promise; because of this she feels she cannot wed him and resists even her father:

If force could bend me, you might think, with shame,  
That I debased the blood from whence I came.

She threatens to die with Almanzor. When reminded of her vows, she retorts: "How dare you claim my faith, and break your own?" Yet, if Boabdelin spares Almanzor, she shall wed him. When Almanzor learns of the deal, he thinks it too cruel: "Would you, to save my life, my love betray?" He wants to die and is upbraided by Almahide:

Rash men, like you, and impotent of will,  
Give chance no time to turn, but urge her still;...  
You sought a heart that was engaged before.  
'Twas a swift love which took you in his way;  
Flew only through your heart, but made no stay:

She asks Almanzor to live and learn to love better.

Build love a nobler temple in my place;  
You'll find the fire has but enlarged your space.

The lovers part. (V,ii)

Almanzor is the hero of the play; he has the largest part and his actions make the plot progress. He is extremely brave and apparently very strong; he scorns death as all brave men do; he is extremely proud and considers himself the subject of no one. He is undoubtedly a very passionate man; his first action, helping the



Abencerrages, is one of impulse even if the motive is noble: because theirs is the weaker side, his generosity prompts him to help them regardless of whether their cause is right or wrong. He cannot bear the Duke of Arcos' scorn and decides to set him free in order to vanquish him again. He is the prey of anger when Boabdelin refuses him the Duke. When Abdalla asks for his help, he does not take into consideration the rightfulness of Abdalla's claim and will help him just because Abdalla is his friend. He tries to resist his love for Almahide but cannot. When refused Almahide by Abdalla, he does not try to understand Abdalla's reasons but turns against him. Having freed Almahide, he obeys his passion to the point of insisting that she take him instead of Boabdelin; he relents only when she shows him the way to win her: gaining her father's consent. Finally, he would rather die than give up Almahide.

That Almanzor's nature is noble is unquestioned. But he also is too much a prey to his passions. They make him behave rashly and he fails to act perfectly in accordance with the laws of honor. He never is conscious of acting basely, on the contrary; if he were, he would immediately reform since then his reason would show him the way to "curb his will"; it is just that his passionate nature blinds his reason, which makes him, to a certain extent, incapable of differentiating between right and wrong. Almahide consistently reminds him of this flaw; she sums up his character in her last speech, calls him "rash...impotent of will," but she trusts his noble nature: his passion will burn out, reason will take the upper

hand: "You'll find the fire has but enlarged your space."

An interesting range of characters surrounds Almanzor and throws light on his own psychological portrait: Abdalla for instance is essentially noble, at least at the beginning; he has brought Almanzor to Boabdelin's help and recognizes Almanzor's outstanding noble character. He also falls madly in love; goaded into betrayal by Lyndaraxa, he resists at first; he knows his reason should take the upper hand but finds himself incapable of resisting his passion; at least he is not basely ambitious, and if he turns traitor, it is only to win Lyndaraxa. The difference between him and Almanzor is that Abdalla is conscious of his betrayal of the dicta of honor, while Almanzor is never aware of not strictly obeying its requirements. Almanzor is given the benefit of the doubt that, should he become aware of his shortcomings, he would immediately act accordingly. The real question of the play is will he or won't he. But Abdalla is irremediably lost since, knowing what he should do, he does not do it. His reason is not strong enough to overcome his passions.

Abdelmelech, also in love with Lyndaraxa, is also essentially noble. He tries to remind Abdalla of his duty to his king. But he also loves Lyndaraxa, and loves her too much for his own good; over and over he is Lyndaraxa's toy, who makes of him what she wants. In a way he is a greater slave to his passions than Abdalla, since Lyndaraxa, promised to him, betrays him in favor of Abdalla, and since he is at all times conscious of Lyndaraxa's ambitious and low nature. Abdalla loves her too much to see any fault in her, but

Abdelmelech knowing her, still cannot help loving. In a way he is the weaker of the two.

Boabdelin is weak, inglorious in battle, incapable of generosity and a slave of his passion for Almahide, since knowing she does not love him he will still have her.

Zulema, treacherous, with no ethical sense whatsoever, is only capable of the lowest passions: envy, treachery, betrayal, and lust in lieu of love; it is he who would relegate reason to old age, youth having nothing to do with it.

The pattern of absolute honor is Ozmyn. He has killed Benzayda's brother, but only in self-defense; he is extremely valorous in battle and is the only one capable of standing comparison to Almanzor in that respect. His love for Benzayda is extremely pure and is repaid in kind. Torn between his duty to obey his father and the duty he owes Benzayda, he finally chooses to follow his duty to her; but we can be sure it is not for selfish reasons but because this duty is the strongest: apart from the claim she has on him through her love, she has saved his life; and above all, she needs protection since her own father has rejected her and she has no one to turn to. Benzayda is as noble as he is and unselfishly urges him to abandon her and reconcile himself to his father.

But the absolutely virtuous character is Almahide: too noble to feel real love for anyone but a soul as fiery as Almanzor, she is, however, in complete control of her passion, knowing her duty to her word, her father, and even Almanzor since she is the one who shows

him the path of virtue.

The Conquest of Granada (2nd Part)

The Spaniards are winning. Abdalla assures Ferdinand a faction is secretly working for him in Granada. Ozmyn and Benzayda are taken prisoners, but Queen Isabel places them under her protection because they love each other so well:

Love's an heroic passion, which can find  
No room in any base degenerate mind: (I,1)

In the Alhambra the people mutiny; they want Boabdelin either to surrender or call back Almanzor; he finally yields to persuasion and asks Almahide to recall Almanzor. Almahide gives all the appearance of loving her husband:

But know, that, when my person I resigned,  
I was too noble not to give my mind.  
No more the shadow of Almanzor fear;  
I have no room, but for your image, here.

But Boabdelin is not convinced and is very jealous. Almahide will send for Almanzor in spite of the fact that she admits: "For Almanzor I in secret mourn!" Though she loves him, she feels strong enough to face him: "My heart's not mine, but all my actions are." (I,1)

Ozmyn has some misgivings about staying, even as a prisoner, with the enemy. But his honor bids him protect Benzayda. Selin, Benzayda's father, enters pursued by enemies. Ozmyn offers to defend him: "My honour bids me succour the oppressed." But it is Abenamar, Ozmyn's father, who is pursuing Selin, and Ozmyn is lost between

conflicting duties:

My father here! then Heaven itself has laid  
The snare, in which my virtue is betrayed.

Abenamar is outraged:

I'll do a Roman justice,--thou shalt die!

Ozmyn agrees to die, but on one condition:

But bury in my grave two houses' hate.  
Let Selin live; and see your justice done  
On me, while you revenge him for his son.

Abenamar is not moved; he will kill both Selin and his own son. In despair Ozmyn decides to protect Selin; he parries his father's thrusts, and attacks only the others. Abdalla and the Spaniards come to his help and put Abenamar and his party to flight. Ozmyn turns to Selin and asks his forgiveness. Selin is moved to tears and agrees to let Benzayda marry him; he also promises not to hate Abenamar and hopes that:

Even that hard father yet may one day be  
By kindness vanquished, as you vanquished me. (II,1)

Selin informs Abdalla that Lyndaraxa is holding the fort for him, and that his party is strong. They decide to attack. Ozmyn will join them, but since he says he must not draw his sword against his prince, he will go only to shield Selin and Benzayda from harm.

Abdelmelech has stormed the Albayzyn and taken it. Lyndaraxa is brought before him in chains; in a few moments, however, she has him in the palm of her hand by pretending she loves him and has held the Albayzyn against him only to give him an easy victory. She succeeds in gaining enough time for Abdalla to get hold of the

Albayzyn; Abdelmelech flees while Lyndaraxa uses her allurements on Abdalla. Abdalla does not really believe her but wants to:

My love makes all your acts unquestioned go,  
And sets a sovereign stamp on all you do.  
Your love I will believe with hoodwinked eyes;—  
In faith, much merit in much blindness lies. (II,11)

Meantime, in the Alhambra, Almanzor arrives in response to Almahide's call. He will serve her but begs her to send him away for:

So, having seen you once so killing fair,  
A second sight were but to move despair.

She argues, however, that "All objects lose by too familiar view."  
But he would rather not take a chance:

For your own sake in quiet let me go;  
Press not too far on a despairing foe:  
I may turn back, and armed against you move,  
With all the furious train of hopeless love.

Almahide, however, believes in his noble nature:

Your honour cannot to ill thoughts give way,  
And mine can run no hazard by your stay.

But Almanzor does not trust himself as much as she trusts him.

Do you then think I can with patience see  
That sovereign good possessed, and not by me?  
No; I all day shall languish at the sight,  
And rave on what I did not see all night;  
My quick imagination will present  
The scenes and images of your content,  
When to my envied rival you dispense  
Joys too unruly and too fierce for sense.

Almahide will have none of that nonsense and calls it: "Tis but the raging calenture of love." She insists on appealing to his better nature:

You know I am from recompense debarred...  
 Your fame's too noble to deserve a cheat...  
 Your virtue to the hardest proof I bring;--  
 Unbribed, preserve a mistress and a king.

Almanzor finally rises to the call:

I'll stop at nothing that appears so brave:  
 I'll do't, and now I no reward will have.  
 You've given my honour such an ample field,  
 That I may die, but that shall never yield. (II,iii)

He only asks and gets her scarf for reward.

Boabdelin is moody and jealous because of that scarf. When Almanzor discovers Almahide weeping, he is outraged. Boabdelin is not convinced of Almahide's innocence and wants Almanzor to leave. Almanzor won't; he will stay to defend Almahide, who, to convince Boabdelin of her good-will, asks Almanzor to return the scarf. Abdelmelech and his party come in to get the king and Almanzor to help them, but Almanzor refuses to move from beside the queen. Granada is taken, Boabdelin is made prisoner, and Almahide upbraids Almanzor:

Unkind Almanzor, how am I betrayed!  
 Betrayed by him in whom I trusted most!  
 But I will ne'er outlive what I have lost.  
 Is this your succour, this your boasted love?

She leaves Almanzor, who repents:

Oh, I have erred; but fury made me blind;  
 And, in her just reproach, my fault I find! (III,i)

He goes out to fight and brings back Abdalla prisoner; he will set him free in exchange for Boabdelin; Abdalla, of course, agrees.

(III,i)

In the Albayzyn Ozmyyn learns that Selin has fallen into the hands of Abenamar, who will release him only in exchange for Ozmyyn.

Ozmyn is ready and tells Benzayda:

My duty therefore shows the nearest way,  
To free your father, and my own obey.

But Benzayda won't let him go. "I have a soul as masculine as you."  
She will go instead. Ozmyn appears to agree, but he resolves to stop her and go to his death. (II,ii)

The exchange of Abdalla for Boabdelin is made. The Duke of Arcos praises Almanzor and acknowledges a strange sympathy for him; Almanzor also expresses the same feelings towards him. Lyndaraxa is struck by Almanzor's valor and decides to make him love her; she tries all her allurements and advises him to love "somewhere else," but Almanzor replies:

My love's now grown so much a part of me,  
That life would, in the cure endangered be:...  
Though Almahide with scorn rewards my care,--  
Yet, then to change, 'tis nobler to despair.  
My love's my soul; and that from fate is free;  
'Tis that unchanged and deathless part of me. (III,iii)

Ozmyn, Selin and Benzayda by excess of generosity finally soften Abenamar and he does what honor bids him do: set Selin free, and approve of the lovers' marriage. They all embrace, weeping. (IV,i)

With Almanzor's help Boabdelin's party is winning again. Abdelmelech and Abdalla meet and Abdelmelech offers to fight with Abdalla in single battle:

Since we are rivals, honour does command  
We should not die but by each other's hand.

Abdalla is overwhelmed by Abdelmelech's generosity. He offers to die to leave him free to marry Lyndaraxa. When Abdelmelech answers that it is probably a fate worse than death, Abdalla is outraged:



Now thou art base, and I deserve her more;  
Without complaint I will to death adore.

Abdalla is vanquished. Lyndaraxa comes in at that moment and rejoices over his death, pretending to have always loved Abdelmelech; her ingratitude towards Abdalla is the last stroke for Abdelmelech;

My love, half blasted, yet in time would shoot;  
But this last tempest ends it to the root...  
The spell is ended, and the enchantment o'er...  
I'm now awake, and cannot dream again.

Lyndaraxa is ushered out by the guards as a prisoner. (IV,ii)

Zulema and Hamet are hiding in the Alhambra; Zulema means to seduce Almahide at any cost: "Then force shall give, if favour does deny." But seeing Almanzor outside the queen's room, they hide.

Almanzor is a prey to his passions; he is cold and shivering:

My teeth, too, chatter with a sudden fright:—  
These are the raptures of too fierce delight,  
The combat of the tyrants, Hope and Fear.

He cannot restrain himself and is about to enter Almahide's room when his mother's ghost appears before him; she tells him he is of royal birth on her side and of ancient lineage on his father's, and that he has been baptized a Christian. If she is not in heaven, her usual abode, it is in order to warn him against unlawful love. But Almanzor does not heed her warning. When Almahide appears, he asks her to yield to him. Almahide reminds him that "purest love can live without reward." But Almanzor insists:

Were I to die that hour when I possess,  
This minute shall begin my happiness.

Almahide is not deceived:

You love me not, Almanzor; if you did,  
You would not ask what honour must forbid.

She defines honor for him:

Yes, 'tis the conscience of an act well done,  
Which gives us power our own desires to shun;  
The strong and secret curb of headlong will;  
The self-reward of good, and shame of ill.

Still Almanzor insists:

My love's too fierce, and you too killing fair.  
I grow enraged to see such excellence!--

Almahide urges him: "Deny your own desires: for it will be / Too little now to be denied by me" and when she understands she cannot convince him, she offers to stab herself; it was the thing to do to call Almanzor back to reason.

Almanzor: Hold, hold!  
Such fatal proofs of love you shall not give:  
Deny me; hate me; both are just,—but live!  
Your virtue I will ne'er disturb again;

Almahide approves:

'Tis generous to have conquered your desire;  
You mount above your wish, and lose it higher.  
There's pride in virtue, and a kindly heat;  
Not feverish, like your love, but full as great.

Almanzor's reply is:

Alas! I am but half converted yet;  
All resolve, I with one look forget;

They part. (IV,iii)

Zulema and Hamet go into Almahide's room. She runs out dishevelled. Abdelmelech, who is bringing Lyndaraxa to pay her duties to Almahide, runs out to get more help and so does Almahide. On Lyndaraxa's advice, the two brothers decide to accuse Almahide of adultery with Abdelmelech. Boabdelin believes them; so does Almanzor: "I am her lover and she's false to me," though when he hears Lyndaraxa

accuse Almahide, he nevertheless defends her:

'Tis false: she is not ill, nor can she be;  
She must be chaste, because she's loved by me. (IV,iii)

But this is only in public; alone he laments:

I have outfaced myself; and justified  
What I knew false, to all the world beside.

He will be her champion, however, because:

My cause is good, however hers be ill. (V,i)

Almahide, accused falsely, puts her trust in the Christian God. Ozmyn, her brother, will also be her champion. He and Almanzor overcome Hamet and Zulema; the latter repents and exposes Lyndaraxa's treachery before dying. Almahide is freed. However, though she promises to stay true to Boabdelin, she will not behave as his wife, "But from this day I will not know your bed," since he did not believe in her innocence. Because of that resolution she bids Almanzor never to see her again: "My unspotted name must be my care." Almanzor asks to kiss her hand; Boabdelin comes in and attacks them with his guards. But the enemy has entered the fort and once more Almahide begs Almanzor to help her husband; Almanzor is ready:

Yes, I once more will my revenge neglect,  
And whom you can forgive, I can protect. (V,ii)

Boabdelin is killed in the course of the battle. While fighting, the Duke of Arcos and Almanzor recognize each other as father and son. Abdelmelech, prisoner of Lyndaraxa, stabs her, then kills himself. Almanzor pays homage to King Ferdinand, who is also his cousin:

I bring a heart which homage never knew  
Yet it finds something of itself in you;

Something so kingly, that my haughty mind  
Is drawn to yours, because 'tis of a kind.

Queen Isabel takes Almahide under her protection. But Almahide will not yield to Almanzor:

I owe my love and honour to his sword,  
But owe my love to my departed lord.

Almanzor seems to find the situation tragically ironic:

Thus, when I have no living force to dread,  
Fate finds me enemies amongst the dead.  
I'm now to conquer ghosts, and to destroy  
The strong impressions of a bridal joy.

His irony is lost on Almahide: "Virtue opposes you, and modesty."

This time Almanzor is really crushed:

But I have lived too long; I never knew  
When fate was conquered, I must combat you.

He offers to die; but Queen Isabel, as Almahide's spiritual parent, commands her to marry Almanzor. Almahide will dutifully obey but only after her year of widowhood is expired.

Almanzor, happy in the prospect, will help drive the Moors away and the play ends with his:

Live and reign,  
Great Ferdinand and Isabel of Spain! (V,ii)

In the second part of The Conquest of Granada there is no interesting new factor in characterization except for Almanzor. In the first part, he was noble, dedicated to honor but too easily swayed by passion; the question as to whether he will ultimately attain his better self is left unanswered. The second part sees him oscillating like a pendulum between his better and his worse nature. The stronger he is at one moment, the weaker he is at another; he reaches his lowest

point when only Almahide's attempted suicide stops his repeated demands that she yield to him; but this lowest point follows the seduction scene in which he stood adamant to all of Lyndaraxa's allurements. Eventually, guided by Almahide, he dominates his passions and acts unselfishly.

### Aureng-Zebe

The Emperor of India is seventy years old and not his old self any more:

Oh, had he still that character maintained,  
Of valour, which, in blooming youth, he gained!

His sons, in open rebellion, are fighting him and each other. Arimant, Governor of Agra, is discussing their relative character:

Darah, the eldest, bears a generous mind,  
But to implacable revenge inclined:...  
From Sujah's valour I should much expect  
But he's a bigot of the Persian sect  
And by a foreign interest seeks to reign  
Hopeless by love the sceptre to obtain...  
Morat's too insolent, too much a brave;  
His courage to his envy is a slave....  
But Aureng-Zebe, by no strong passion swayed,  
Except his love, more temperate is, and weighed:  
This Atlas must our sinking state uphold;  
In council cool, but in performance bold:  
He sums their virtues in himself alone,  
And adds the greatest, of a loyal son:  
His father's cause upon his sword he wears,  
And with his arms, we hope, his fortune bears.

(I,1)

Aureng-Zebe beats off Darah and Sujah. But instead of being happy about the news, the Emperor wants to forbid his return; he loves Indamora, the captive Queen of Cassemere, Aureng-Zebe's

mistress. However, he is finally convinced by Arimant of the necessity of rewarding Aureng-Zebe. (I,1)

On his return Aureng-Zebe goes straight to the Emperor, "The best of kings and fathers to embrace." The Emperor receives him in a rather cool way: "O Aureng-Zebe! thy virtues shine too bright. / They flash too fierce." Indamora also is cool toward him, and Aureng-Zebe is discouraged:

Nature herself is changed to punish me;  
Virtue turned vice, and faith inconstancy.

Finally Indamora tells him the truth, in spite of the fact that by doing so she has to be thrown in jail. Aureng-Zebe, outraged, wants to draw at his father's guards, but Indamora appeals to his sense of honor:

Lose not the honour you have early won,  
But stand the blameless pattern of a son.

Aureng-Zebe is grateful:

I've thought, and blessed be you who gave me time;  
My virtue was surprised into a crime.  
Strong virtue, like strong nature, struggles still;  
Exerts itself, and then throws off the ill.  
I to a son's and lover's praise aspire,  
And must fulfill the part which both require. (I,1)

Aureng-Zebe, having repulsed Morat's attacks three times, is urged by the people to take matters in his hands and redress the wrongs committed against him by his father; but he refuses to be a rebel:

Shall treason end what loyalty begun?  
I own no wrongs; some grievance I confess;  
But kings, like gods, at their own time redress.  
(II,1)

Arimant has fallen prey to Indamora's charm. She makes him her friend and protects him from the Emperor's jealousy. The Emperor still courts her in vain. The Empress, his second wife and Morat's mother, complains of the Emperor's neglect; he pretends he still loves her, but she is no dupe, laughs at his old age and insults him. He makes his guards seize her, but on Aureng-Zebe's prayers she is set free again. The king praises Aureng-Zebe's valour; but when Aureng-Zebe asks for Indamora, the Emperor refuses and admits his guilt:

What would you more? my crime I sadly view,  
Acknowledge, am ashamed, and yet pursue.

He tries to bribe Aureng-Zebe by naming him his successor, but Aureng-Zebe's answer is:

To after-ages let me stand a shame,  
When I exchange for crowns my love or fame!...  
From my love, 'tis sacrilege to part:

The Emperor is incensed: "Fool! with both hands thus to push back a crown." He banishes Aureng-Zebe and decides to give his crown to Morat. (II,1) Aureng-Zebe, alone, reflects on what has happened:

How vain is virtue, which directs our ways  
Through certain danger to uncertain praise!  
Barren, and airy name! thee Fortune flies,  
With thy lean train, the pious and the wise....  
The world is made for the bold impious man,  
Who stops at nothing, seizes all he can.

In spite of this, when once more urged by his followers to rise and mutiny, Aureng-Zebe answers:

Ill treated, and forsaken, as I am,  
I'll not betray the glory of my name:

'Tis not for me, who have preserved a state,  
To buy an empire at so base a rate.

He will not flee either:

Presence of mind, and courage in distress,  
Are more than armies, to procure success. (II,1)

Melesinda, Morat's wife, and Indamora have become fast friends. Arimant tells them the news of Morat's triumph and Aureng-Zebe's misfortune. Melesinda promises to ask her husband's favor for Indamora and Aureng-Zebe. Aureng-Zebe and Morat meet in the King's presence. Once more the King is convinced of Aureng-Zebe's good faith and Morat's ambitions:

In Aureng-Zebe true loyalty appears.  
He, for my safety, does his own despise;  
Still, with his wrongs, I find his duty rise.  
I feel my virtue struggling in my soul,  
But stronger passion does its power control.— (III,1)

In private, he again asks Aureng-Zebe to give up Indamora and become his heir; once more Aureng-Zebe refuses and is then condemned to death:

Life, with my Indamora, I would choose;  
But, losing her, the end of living lose. (III,1)

Mourmahal, the Empress, has fallen in love with Aureng-Zebe: "That man, that god-like man, so brave, so great." Called to reason by her attendant, Zayda, she replies, "'Tis true, but who was e'er in love, and wise?" Though she knows her love is incestuous, yet love, "That sovereign power all guilt from action takes, / At least the stains are beautiful it makes." (III,1)

When Melesinda brings in Indamora to beg Morat's mercy for Aureng-Zebe, Morat falls in love with Indamora, proposes to her, and



is turned down. Aureng-Zebe must die, but Indamora wins for him one day of respite. (III,1)

In a luxurious apartment in Nourmahal's quarters, Aureng-Zebe awaits death:

Distrust, and darkness of a future state,  
Make poor mankind so fearful of their fate.  
Death, in itself, is nothing; but we fear,  
To be we know not what, we know not where.

Nourmahal pretends she is a friend and wants to repay her debt to him who saved her from the Emperor's wrath. Aureng-Zebe answers:

When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat;  
Yet, fooled with hope, men favour the deceit;  
Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay:  
To-morrow's falser than the former day;  
Lies worse, and, while it says, we shall be blest  
With some new joys, cuts off what we possess.  
Strange cozenage! None would live past years again,  
Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain;  
And, from the dregs of life, think to receive,  
What the first sprightly running could not give.  
I'm tired with waiting for this chemic gold,  
Which fools us young, and beggars us when old.

However, Nourmahal makes her passion clear to Aureng-Zebe. He is appalled:

Hence, hence, and to some barbarous climate fly,  
Which only brutes in human form does yield,  
And man grows wild in Nature's common field....  
To veil great sins, a greater crime you choose;  
And, in your incest, your adultery lose.

Having failed in conquering him, Nourmahal bids him drink poison. Aureng-Zebe is about to obey readily: "Grim though he be, Death pleases, when he frees." But Morat stops him, telling him Indamora gained for him a reprieve of one day; Aureng-Zebe is not grateful:

How I disdain a life, which I must buy  
With your contempt, and her inconstancy! (IV,1)

Morat repulses Melesinda and tells his father: "I've now resolved to fill your useless place" both as king and lover of Indamora. The Emperor discovers his mistake too late:

Have I for this, ungrateful as thou art!  
 When right, when nature, struggled in my heart;  
 When Heaven called on me for thy brother's claim,  
 Broke all, and sullied my unspotted fame?...  
 Why was my reason made my passion's slave? (IV,i)

Arimant, on Indamora's request, arranges an interview between the lovers, but Aureng-Zebe has lost confidence in Indamora and accuses her of being unfaithful. Her answer is:

Think you, base interest souls like mine can sway?  
 Or that, for greatness, I can love betray?...  
 And am I guilty, infamous, and base?

Aureng-Zebe: If you are false, those epithets are small;  
 You're then the things, the abstract of them all.

When he asks her to deny, Indamora is too hurt to comply; her refusal drives Aureng-Zebe to the utmost despair:

Ah sex, invented first to damn mankind!  
 Nature took care to dress you up for sin;  
 Adorned, without; unfinished left, within.

Indamora finally admits she has been faithful and tells him the truth:

His pride and brutal fierceness I abhor;  
 But scorn your mean suspicions of me more.  
 I owed my honour and my fame this care:  
 Know what your folly lost you, and despair.

Aureng-Zebe believes her, asks her forgiveness, and lets his love loose:

These tears, which fear of death could never draw:  
 Heard you that sigh? from my heaved heart it past,  
 And said, 'If you forgive not, 'tis my last.'

Love mounts, and rolls about my stormy mind,  
 Like fire, that's borne by a tempestuous wind.  
 Oh, I could stifle you, with eager haste!  
 Devour your kisses with my hungry taste!  
 Rush on you! eat you! wander o'er each part,  
 Raving with pleasure, snatch you to my heart!  
 Then hold you off, and gaze! then, with new rage,  
 Invade you till my conscious limbs presage  
 Torrents of joy, which all their banks o'erflow!  
 So lost, so blest, as I but then could know!

They are reconciled. (IV,1)

When Arimant enters with the news that Morat by treachery has seized the Citadel, the Emperor asks Aureng-Zebe's forgiveness.

Aureng-Zebe is more than magnanimous:

Accuse yourself no more: you could not be  
 Ungrateful; could commit no crime to me.

The Emperor is moved to tears and decides that "His love, alone, deserves my dying care." Aureng-Zebe replies: "Fighting for you, my death will glorious be." More realistically Indamora asks him to: "Seek to preserve yourself, and live for me." The act ends with Aureng-Zebe reconciled to all his former ideals:

With glory and with love, at once, I burn:  
 I feel the inspiring heat, and absent god return.  
 (IV,1)

Morat wants to force his love on Indamora, but she appeals to his conscience and strangely enough, Morat seems moved:

I without guilt would mount the royal seat;  
 But yet 'tis necessary to be great.

Indamora rejects this stand:

All greatness is in virtue understood:  
 'Tis only necessary to be good.

Asked what he desires most, Morat answers:

Renown and fame,  
And power, as uncontrolled as is my will.

Indamora sets him right:

How you confound desires of good and ill!  
But true renown is still with virtue joined;  
But lust of power lets loose the unbridled mind.  
Yours is a soul irregularly great.

She goes on, appealing all the time to his better nature until he decides to give back his crown, but retains his claim on her. When a follower tells him that Aureng-Zebe is slain, Morat refuses to rejoice:

Know, I am changed, and would not have him slain....  
I mourn, and wish I could recall the dead.  
Love softens me; and blows up fires, which pass  
Through my tough heart, and melt the stubborn mass.  
(V,1)

But Nourmahal has betrayed her son; she is fighting him, and her forces are winning. She enters the Citadel, gets hold of Indamora, and is about to stab her when Morat enters fighting and is wounded in spite of Nourmahal's attempt to prevent her guards from hurting him: "Disarm, but save my son." Morat is dying at Indamora's feet and kissing her hand when Aureng-Zebe enters and sees them in that posture:

Thou shalt not break yet, heart, nor shall she know  
My inward torments by my outward show:

Indamora, unconscious of Aureng-Zebe's presence, calls to Morat:

Oh, stay; or take me with you when you go;  
There's nothing now worth living for below.

She cannot believe her eyes when she sees Aureng-Zebe, but he pays no attention to her until finally he turns to her and says:

I go, to take forever from your view,  
Both the loved object and the hated too.

Indamora tries to explain the situation to him, but Aureng-Zebe is too angry to understand, and accuses her of not loving him enough; if she had, she would not have needed Morat and would have willingly died: "What could she give more who durst not die?" Indamora's "My love, my faith" only prompts Aureng-Zebe to repeat that: "She never loved who durst not venture all." Yet he cannot forget her.

What shall I do? y'are lodged within my breast:  
Your image never will be thence displaced;  
But there it lies, stabbed, mangled, and defaced.

When Indamora offers to part, Aureng-Zebe is extremely distressed:

Now you distract me more: Shall then the day,  
Which views my triumph, see our loves decay?

After she leaves him, Aureng-Zebe admits that she is guiltless:

Forever lost! and I repent too late.  
My foolish pride would set my whole estate,  
Till, at one throw, I lost all back to fate.

But the king brings Indamora back by force; Aureng-Zebe reproaches her:

O Indamora, you would break my heart!  
Could you resolve, on any terms to part?  
I thought your love eternal: Was it tied  
So loosely, that a quarrel could divide?  
I grant that my suspicions were unjust;  
But would you leave me, for a small distrust?

Indamora, seemingly reluctant, gives him her hand. Nourmahal, raving because of some poison she took, enters, and delirious tells of her love for Aureng-Zebe.

The Emperor gives Indamora's hand to Aureng-Zebe and bids him:

"The just rewards of love and honour wear." (V,1)

Aureng-Zebe, the hero, is a near perfect pattern of virtue. Not once during the whole play does he act basely. He is at all times what we were told he was at the beginning of the play: "By no strong passion swayed, except his love." No matter how strong his love for Indamora is, filial duty comes first, and he will do nothing to take Indamora away from his father. Without question he feels passion -- love, anger, jealousy -- but he is not "swayed" by passion. Though, relentlessly, fate and his father keep pushing him around, his only reaction is a sort of despair, of bitter scepticism. This scepticism, however, is never strong enough to make him perform even one act which would not conform to the strict requirements of honor; he is a sceptic, but not a cynic. And even his scepticism is only temporary; at the end of the play he is reconciled with his former ideals. His jealousy toward Indamora cannot be considered a noble virtue. It is the only blemish of his character, but even so this jealousy is not the cause of wrong doing. It does not prompt him to betrayal or murder or any act unworthy of a hero; it results only in what he himself calls a "quarrel." He really considers it a proof of the intensity of his passion.

There is no character in the play worthier than Aureng-Zebe. Even Indamora is not as worthy; she has a few blemishes of her own. She lures Morat on for Aureng-Zebe's sake; she does take advantage of Arimant's love for her; and she is afraid to die, though she thinks Aureng-Zebe is dead. Apart from that she is perfect; true to her honor and to her love.

The Emperor, essentially noble, is ruled by his passion for Indamora. Though his reason is there to tell him what is right or wrong, his passion is too strong to overrule his reason. He is his noble self once more when, at the end, ruled by his better nature, he brings back Indamora to Aureng-Zebe in spite of the fact that he still loves her.

The characterization of Morat follows the same pattern as that of the Emperor: ruled by his baser passions, he eventually sees the light and dies redeemed.

## FOOTNOTES

### CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup>George Saintsbury, ed., Dryden (New York, n.d.), xiv.

<sup>2</sup>Citations from The Indian Queen, The Indian Emperor and Tyrannic Love are from Dryden: The Dramatic Works, ed. Montague Summers (London, 1931) — hereafter cited as Dramatic Works.

<sup>3</sup>Dramatic Works, II, 331.

<sup>4</sup>Citations from Conquest of Granada, Parts I and II, and Aureng-Zebe are taken from Dryden, ed. George Saintsbury (New York, n.d.).



### CHAPTER III

#### THE ARCHETYPE

It is clear from what has preceded that the different heroes of the heroic plays have much in common, belong to a type which can be recognized very easily and should not be hard to delineate. Before doing so, however, there is a distinction which, though essential, does not seem to have been established by the majority of the critics who have dealt with the question: The distinction between the heroic hero as a type ideally conceived and the actual hero of a heroic play. Very often a critic will discuss some qualities of the heroic hero taken in general, ideally, or applied to the particular hero of one of the plays, indifferently. In many instances the distinction is irrelevant, but not always. For instance, The Conquest of Granada is one of Dryden's better known plays; the hero is Almanzor; Almanzor is heroic. What happens is that a great number of critics, speaking of the heroic hero in general, will look for distinctive features in Almanzor and, focusing on the hero of a single well known play, make of him the prototype of the genre. The method may be fruitful in some instances but not in others. In Almanzor's case, his ranting, for instance, is made by such critics a necessary feature of the heroic hero; but from the summaries that preceded, we find that only two other major

characters in the plays belong to the ranting type: Montezuma in The Indian Queen and not in The Indian Emperor, and Maximin in Tyrannic Love. Maximin is not a hero, and his ranting actually is an exteriorization of his villainy; that leaves only Montezuma. When two heroes out of five rant, it is clear that ranting cannot be made a necessary feature of the heroic hero. It is only when a quality will be found in all the "heroes" of the plays, and only in them, that we can say that it characterizes them. For instance, all the heroes are brave in battle, but so are Morat, Maximin, Odmar, Abdalla, who are by no means "heroic" heroes. The hero is never afraid of death; but neither are many of the villains: Maximin, the villain par excellence, is certainly not a coward. Consequently, courage and disdain of death are not specific characteristics of the hero.

As the preceding plot summaries make plain, there is, however, one major common trait of character which distinguishes the heroic hero from the others: his dominion, or eventual dominion, over his passion or passions. This is the one feat that a villain is never capable of (Traxalla, Zulema, Maximin); or if he is, it is only after he has brought upon himself disaster and destruction by his subjection to passion (Zempoalla, Montezuma in The Indian Emperor, Abdalla, Almeria, Morat, etc.)

Honor, Passion, Reason, seem to be the poles of attraction of all the major characters, whether heroes or villains. A hero will control his passion and act according to honor; a villain will let

his passion loose and forsake his honor. The conflict is not really between passion and honor, however, but between reason and passion. If a character's reason is strong enough to curb his passion, he will have no difficulty in following the demands of honor. If it is too weak, he is lost. Over and over this law is stressed by heroes and villains alike. Dominated by passion, a character is a villain; dominated by reason, he is a hero. Honor or dishonor are the necessary consequence of the presence or absence of reason: this is why it is very often difficult to distinguish between these two concepts. Honor being a necessary consequence of reason, the characters use the terms interchangeably. This confusion which many critics have taken over is made apparent in Almanzor again (this character in many ways is responsible for having led a number of critics astray). Almanzor idolizes honor; his devotion to honor is acknowledged by friend and foe alike; but we have seen, in the plot summary, how, though he believes he is acting according to honor, he is in fact betraying it because he is led astray by his passionate nature (as Almahide tells him). Once his passion is overcome, his sense of values is reestablished. In fact, the way a character becomes honorable is often childishly portrayed; by means of an argumentative dialogue, an exchange of ideas between two characters, the better one logically argues with the weaker one and convinces him of his error. The weaker one, shown the way, becomes a better one. This is true of heroes: Almanzor convinced by Almahide, Porphyrius by Berenice. It is also true of villains: Morat, ambitious, a

fratricide, an ingrate, and unfaithful, needs only one ratiocinative conversation with Indamora to be won over to honor.

This control over the passions is really the touchstone by which everything is judged and regulated: A passion is not in itself wrong or right; neither is its intensity an indication: Maximin does not love St. Catherine more than Berenice loves Porphyrius; but Berenice controls her passion while Maximin does not: her passion is admirable, his beastly. The object of a passion has nothing to do, either, with the quality of that passion; a perfect character is often loved by villains; Saint Catherine is loved by Maximin, Montezuma by Zempoalla, Cortez by Almeria, Almahide by Zulema; Abdalla's love for Lyndaraxa is beautiful, but his subjection to it is not. Almahide is loved by Almanzor, Zulema, and Boabdelin; these last two feel contemptible loves. Almanzor's eventually becomes a beautiful one.

As a matter of fact, the quality of a given passion changes according to whether it is controlled or not: Odmar's love for Alibech was noble to start with and made him accomplish admirable feats; as soon as he abandons himself to revenge and rage, his love becomes lust and no more. On the other hand, Almanzor's love for Almahide, once he is capable of dominating his passions, loses all physical character and becomes a noble inspiration.

Consequently we can only arrive at a conclusion directly opposite from that held by most of the critics reviewed in the introduction. We have to disagree with Chase when he affirms that "the distinctive feature of heroic love is that it nullifies all

other ideals in the lover, and makes him its absolute slave," and that "Honor is only speciously an important feature, as, notwithstanding the usual connotations with it of certain ideals, the heroic play was too late a growth to have the element of honor either of great extent or of vital nature."<sup>1</sup> Chase stresses this point over and over again:

Heroic love is not a high and ennobling passion, but one which has the great and distinctive peculiarity, that it sanctions a violation of all moral laws wherever they are opposed to its free sweep and range, although, when not conflicting with love, they are recognized as laws to which man owes allegiance, and ideals of conduct toward which we should work.<sup>2</sup>

J. W. Tupper is essentially of the same opinion. He holds that what characterizes the heroes of the heroic plays is "their contempt for the impossible and their overwhelming desire to attain their ends. They scorn opposition, are utterly without fear, and in their most frenzied moods fly in the face of the powers above...the hero of the heroic play is first and always a lover, and his heroism is directed invariably towards the attainment of his love."<sup>3</sup> If we review the list of heroes, we shall find that few fit the description: Guyomar, Cortez, Porphyrius, Aureng-Zebe contradict it; even Almanzor spends most of his time protecting Boabdelin and restoring Almahide to her lawful possessor.

One of the consequences of holding love as supreme is to foster the error of opposing love and honor; many critics seem to imply that there is a conflict between them and that the hero is supposed to follow one or the other, to make a choice. This error is strengthened

by the fact that love is more often than not the only passion that seems to animate all characters, heroes and villains alike. A confusion, like the one between honor and reason, quite understandably follows: the pervading passion being love, the ideal being honor, love and honor are opposed instead of passion and reason.

But as was repeatedly pointed out in the summaries, the hero is never subjected to such a choice: Montezuma in The Indian Queen does not have to choose between Orazia and honor; as a matter of fact, dominated by anger and pride, he nearly loses his love; for him love and honor are on the same side of the fence. The problem seems rather for him to become worthy of his love by dominating his baser instincts and consequently acting according to the laws of honor. Almanzor does not have to choose between his love and his honor. At no moment is the problem raised in these terms; on the contrary, in order to be worthy of his love, he is called upon, over and over again, to master the various passions to which he is subject: anger, pride, jealousy, and lust. As to Aureng-Zebe, he has nothing to conquer except a few bouts with jealousy. Very passionate, but always in control of his passions, he is both a great lover, and very honorable. As a matter of fact, love seems to be the necessary consequence of honor, as honor is the necessary consequence of reason; since the hero, once he has attained perfection, is always rewarded by the love of the perfect heroine.

Tupper, for instance, argues for the opposition of love and honor: "It is not till we reach the heroic play that we find a

recognized opposition of love to honor, and then love is given the preference."<sup>4</sup> So also argues Sherwood: "Of these two sentiments, love and honour, love is the more important....In case of conflict between love and honour, love always triumphs."<sup>5</sup> It is true that each heroic play ends with love triumphant; but it also ends with honor triumphant; as a matter of fact, love triumphs because honor triumphs. The error results from equating love and passion, and using both terms interchangeably, as with honor and reason; passion versus reason which is right becomes love versus honor, which is wrong. This is why critics eventually contradict themselves as to the conclusions they draw: for instance, Tupper, in spite of the fact that he believes in a conflict between love and honor, has to admit that "In few of these plays does the conflict ever resolve itself in an absolute choice between love and honour."<sup>6</sup> Mildred E. Hartsock takes the opposition of love and reason for granted, though she points out that "In Dryden's plays, the dualism between passion and reason is, with few exceptions, purely nominal"; she, however, arrives at this conclusion by holding the view that passion is supreme over reason: "The characters in Dryden's plays are in the grip of devastating emotions, the laws of which are categorical, the force of which is irresistible." It is relevant that all of Miss Hartsock's illustrations are drawn from villains, though she seems to speak for both heroes and villains: "But although they [the heroes] and others overcome every physical obstacle and enjoy freedom from external restraints...they inevitably fall victims to their

own passion."<sup>7</sup> This statement is of course very misleading. If she means that the hero can feel strong passion, she is of course right; but the word "victim" is inappropriate: the hero (not the villain) is never the victim of his passion but its conqueror; he first overcomes it for honor's sake; and then is rewarded by its fulfillment. This is why the only passion that animates heroes is love; love indeed can be a devastating passion; but controlled by reason it becomes pure and noble (very often Platonic), — the noble passion par excellence.

If this interpretation of the hero has any validity, it also contradicts that portion of the criticism which considers both heroic tragedy and the hero as essentially romantic manifestations. Bonamy Dobrée is the principal exponent of this trend in the criticism of the heroic tragedy:

The dramatists of the day were trying to express romantic ideas in a form specially evolved for the classical....What is curious about Restoration Tragedy is, that however much it may conform to classical order, the passions expressed in it are nearly always romantic passions: in it, the limitations of human nature, one might say of nature, are disregarded and even flaunted.<sup>8</sup>

In his latest study on Dryden, Bonamy Dobrée is still of the same opinion: "Emotions, states of mind, which are to the final degree romantic, are tailored into, or at least partly wear, severe classical garb....Be prepared to enter a world of absolute emotions."<sup>9</sup>

Granted that the word "romantic" is complex, misleading, and subject to numerous interpretations, yet it has a fairly definite and accepted connotation, especially as opposed to "classic." Having reached the conclusion that the hero, who as everybody agrees dominates the heroic play, is essentially characterized by his submission



to the dicta of reason, we can only call the term "romantic" as applied to the heroic play, a misnomer. Dobrée himself gives us what he means by "romantic" when he discusses Dryden's poetry: "There is there, in his poetry, none of the yearning of the Romantics, the reachings out after the impalpable in the attempt to grasp the inapprehensible: this vivid, actual imagination plays around the actions and passions of men and women as they live out their lives, in soul as well as in body."<sup>10</sup> This is apparently what Dobrée finds in Dryden: romanticism in the heroic plays, anti-romanticism in the rest of his poetry. He does not seem to have been puzzled by the question as to how an author can be so completely romantic in one part of his work and anti-romantic in another. Our conclusion, of course, is that such a contradiction, were it possible in any author, does not at any rate exist in Dryden. If we take up Dobrée's image, we can only reverse it and call the emotions, ideas and states of mind "classical" and the garb "romantic." The hero, rather than being a wolf in sheep's clothing, is a sheep in wolf's clothing. This is the impression we get when we take a close look at the nature of the "Reason" which stands supreme among the hero's ideals. What is made evident in the plot summaries is that this "Reason" is not the overpowering, absolute and infallible faculty which leads to all knowledge and is the source of what is right and wrong. It is not the goddess of the French Revolution and man is not a god because he possesses reason. Rather, this reason is a limited tool which helps direct man's steps in everyday life; it is Hobbes's and Locke's

Reason; in other words, it is common sense. In Dryden's heroic plays, far from being the absolute faculty, it is only an instrument which, properly used, helps the hero conform to honor.

If we now examine the notion of honor, there, too, we find very little that can be qualified as romantic. The nature of the concept of honor in Dryden's time is a very interesting question, but apart from the fact that it has been better treated elsewhere,<sup>11</sup> it is a question that is outside the scope of this study. What is relevant is the nature of "Honor" in Dryden's plays in relation to the hero, and there we find that whatever the concept, the connotations, honor, in fine, consists essentially of a set of rules or different sets of rules; love, friendship, duty to king and country, all are minutely regulated, and there is no problem as to the obligations they create for the hero; each has a code which the hero is supposed to follow faithfully. Not only is he supposed to follow the code, but the implication seems to be that he is a hero in direct proportion to his adherence to that code; the better he obeys the rules, the more "heroic" he is. When a "heroic" hero in Dryden's plays does the right thing, it is never because of an inner prompting, the fulfillment of the inner self, but rather because it is what is held to be right by the social structure which surrounds him. In the "heroic" hero, in final analysis we find the submission of the individual to the dicta of the tribe. Not once does the hero ever really question any of the duties imposed on him. This complete devotion, submission, shall we say blindness, this total commitment of the self is what has

made some critics speak of passion. But there is no need to stretch the point and show how unromantic this sort of passion is. The "heroic" hero has no need for motives; he knows what he must do; his only problem is to do it. We may characterize him best by calling him the anti-Hamlet hero. Hamlet's "honor" requires him to kill Claudius; no other "duty" or "love" or external obstacle really stops him from avenging his father; yet it takes him five acts to do it; and then only as the result of a spontaneous gesture caused by his mother's murder. The searching, the questioning, the indecision are certainly not the "heroic" hero's forte; Aureng-Zebe, the closest to Hamlet among the heroes, awaiting death, gives in four lines the gist of the "to be or not to be" soliloquy:

Distrust, and darkness of a future state,  
 Make poor mankind so fearful of their fate.  
 Death, in itself, is nothing; but we fear,  
 To be we know not what, we know not where. (IV,1)

But this speech is not functional like its original; it does not portray a state of mind which directly or indirectly influences the actions of the character who utters it; it is only a pretty but gratuitous ornament.

This lack of need for inner motivation is what makes the "heroic" hero essentially a man of action. Whether he is doing what he is supposed to do, or momentarily succumbing to his passions, the hero is in a perpetual state of action. He is never busy looking into himself, analyzing his motives, his states of mind, his passions. This has been done for him by others, by the social structure that surrounds him, and he has accepted its dicta once and for all. For

this reason we should not be surprised to find that the "heroic" play consists of a series of superimposed incidents following closely one upon another; given the hero, it could be nothing else. Hence, we can only disagree with those critics who find no relation between plot and character in the heroic play. Speaking of the construction of the heroic plays, J. W. Tupper says: "It is not truly dramatic like that of Shakespeare's tragedies, where the action is in part developed from character; but it is skillfully suited to theatrical effectiveness."<sup>12</sup> Margaret Sherwood also believes that: "Strictly speaking they [the heroic plays] contain no ruling idea working its way through character into action."<sup>13</sup> Our conclusion is that this type of plot is the direct consequence of the hero's character.

The absence of inner conflict, duly and repeatedly noted by critics, is also a consequence of this special way in which the hero's character is conceived. A man whose paramount virtue is or should be complete submission to various codes of honor, has no business with internal conflict. The hero is never face to face with one major, inner problem. His task is rather to stand up to and overcome a succession of mainly physical obstacles which at most symbolize the continuous achievement of the hero: his domination over his self, the constant exercise of his will, which, we repeat, is only directed toward the fulfillment of the dicta of the tribe.

This submission to accepted norms is what makes it difficult to accept the repeated parallelism which the critics find between the

"heroic" hero and Marlowe's Tamburlaine. J. W. Tupper likens Dryden's heroes to Marlowe's (Tamburlaine, Faust, Barabas); the main difference between the two types he finds to reside only in the treatment of love: "They differ, however, in their relation to love. The Marlowian hero treats love as secondary to the attainment of power....But the hero of the heroic play is first and always a lover."<sup>14</sup> Were it correct, this difference in itself would be extremely important, but we have already seen that the hero of the heroic plays is first concerned with honor and only afterwards with love. P. J. Pendlebury, on one hand, holds that the hero of the heroic play is subject to "heroic" love, "most improperly so termed, since, though it inspires the hero's valour, it makes him an abject slave to his own passion, and to the caprice of his mistress."<sup>15</sup> But, on the other hand, he likens Dryden's heroes to Marlowe's and states that "the dream of power beyond the bounds of common experience seems to have attracted Dryden and his audience as much as it attracted Marlowe and the Elizabethans."<sup>16</sup> Almanzor again is probably responsible for this misconception; he does wear a few feathers borrowed from Tamburlaine, but the two characters are actually at opposite poles one from the other. Essentially, they have nothing in common except physical valor. Tamburlaine's drive for power, the "aspiring mind," the climb after "knowledge infinite" are certainly not Almanzor's. Tamburlaine takes his destiny in his own hands and shapes it; his defiance of the gods or God is no mere rhetorical flight; he is bent on reaching the ultimate possibilities of man (symbolized in the "earthly

crown" as opposed to the heavenly), the border where man and God merge and as the "scourge of God" substitutes himself for divine power. Tamburlaine obeys no law but Tamburlaine's. What a far cry from Almanzor who, misled by his tempestuous nature, finally becomes the paragon of submission, submission to the laws of honor, of love, of country, of one's better self; and who ends ten acts of dilly-dallying by shouting, "Live and Reign, / Great Ferdinand and Isabel of Spain." Tamburlaine's "mind" could not have conceived such a pitiful goal; Almanzor's "reason" can think of nothing better.

In a recent unpublished dissertation Mr. M. W. Alssid, after opposing what he calls the "present body of criticism," examines Dryden's heroic plays and comes to the conclusion that they create a "world picture" and that:

Fundamentally, this picture expresses the persistent conflict between characters who embody heroic virtue... and characters who embody satanic vice. Against 'Hell's Dire Agents,' the hero struggles and in his ultimate victory over demonic forces, this man, who is 'more than man,' resolves in himself and for his generation the permanent and universal symbols of a quasi-human, quasi-divine perfection.<sup>17</sup>

Whatever are the arguments which Mr. Alssid uses (on the whole rather far-fetched), they are essentially in contradiction with the picture we arrived at in the plot summaries. The characters are not divided into good and bad, and what is more important, the contest is not between a good and a bad character. In The Indian Emperor, Guyomar has nothing to do with Almeria, and Cortez actually ends up being grateful to her. In The Conquest of Granada, if we decide that Lyndaraxa is the bad character personifying vice, Almanzor meets

her in one scene and does not need to fight her off since not for one moment is he under her charm; there is no contest between Almanzor or Boabdalin either. In Tyrannic Love, Porphyrius and Maximin are not opposed; St. Catherine is opposed to Maximin; but can one speak of contest, of "ultimate victory?" St. Catherine will have nothing to do with Maximin and does not even try to convert him; on the contrary, she needs him to become a martyr and a saint. As to Maximin, all he feels for her is lust, and he lives and dies a man subject to his passions. If St. Catherine had changed him in some way, then there might have been "victory"; as it is, if St. Catherine personifies good and Maximin vice, no victory of vice over virtue is personified. As a matter of fact, Dryden's own analysis of Maximin is quite explicit: "The part of Maximin... was designed by me to set off the character of St. Catherine."<sup>18</sup> It shows that Dryden is not interested in a contest between the two, but in portraying virtue as such and vice as such.

Actually, as we have seen, there is no contest or conflict properly speaking, but rather a constant exercise of the will, of dominion over oneself on the part of the hero; the only conflict is a conflict between passion and reason and that conflict takes place in the hero's own self. As a matter of fact, when we speak of the hero, the word "conflict" is too strong; passion and reason do not tear at each other in the hero's soul; passion is given free reign as long as it is curbed by reason. The struggle resolves itself into a continuous exercise of reason.

What gives the picture of "vice versus virtue" even less validity is the fact that characters are not divided into good and bad. On the contrary, if we look at any play, we find a close gradation in the range of characters, starting with the perfect and leading to the villain. As we have seen, the perfect "heroic" character is not always the hero: in The Indian Queen, it is Acacis; in The Indian Emperor, it is Guyomar; in The Conquest of Granada, it is Ozmyn. As a rule also, the heroine is virtue incarnate, and she certainly undergoes no contest with vice (Almahide, Berenice, Orazia). Following close on the heels of the perfect character, we have the near perfect one, usually the hero (Montezuma in The Indian Queen, Almanzor, Porphyrius in Tyrannic Love, etc.). This character knows where his duty lies, is momentarily misled by passion, but with the help of the virtuous character (generally the heroine) he overcomes his passion and attains perfection. Next comes the essentially noble character who, however, is the slave of an overruling passion which he cannot overcome though he knows he should; this character is generally the old king (Montezuma, in The Indian Emperor, the Emperor in Aureng-Zebe) in love with a much younger woman; in The Conquest of Granada, it is Abdalla or Abdelmelech; in Tyrannic Love, it is Valeria who loves Porphyrius too much for her own good. Further down the hierarchy we find the character given over to passion, who could still be retrievable; in some cases he is retrieved (Morat in Aureng-Zebe); in others he is lost (Odmar in The Indian Emperor); whatever the outcome, this character is doomed to die, however, either justly



punished (Odmarr) or because he has seen the light too late and should be punished anyway for his previous crimes (Morat). Finally, we reach the villain, a slave to his passion or passions, and we regularly witness his downfall; nevertheless, sometimes even this villain is won over to virtue at the end (Zempoalla, Almeria). What this gradation in characterization shows is that each and every character undergoes for himself his own private battle between passion and reason; and he is either victorious or vanquished in direct relation to the amount of reason he is capable of. Using a very gross simplification, we could say that Dryden for his characterization starts from one essential character, then adds the two components, reason and passion; the villains he overloads with passion, then working his way up, he adds less passion and more reason until he reaches the perfect character: reason in complete mastery of passion. This is why some critics have been able to say that there is not much difference between villains and heroes in Dryden's plays.<sup>19</sup> At any given moment, a hero is liable to become a villain if he abandons himself to passion, and a villain can at any time become virtuous if he curbs his passion.

We can now answer Mr. Fujimura's interpretation of the meaning of Dryden's heroic plays; he belongs to that group of critics who believe that the theme of the heroic plays is the struggle between love and honor: "It can be shown that even the central theme, the struggle between love and honor, is strongly naturalistic in conception."<sup>20</sup> We have shown that the struggle is not between love and

honor, but between passion and reason. Mr. Fujimura seems to be aware of the possible confusion in terminology, but he seems to apply it only to reason and honor; he contends that honor "replaces reason as the guide to virtue, and...is nothing more or less than one of the dominant passions."<sup>21</sup> It is true that the commitment to reason is passionate, but as evidenced by the heroes' actions, at no moment is the relationship between reason and honor disregarded, except precisely where the hero, misled by his passions, thinks he is acting according to honor, but in fact is not (Almanzor helping Abdalla, for instance). Later on in his study, Mr. Fujimura states the meaning he gives to honor: "And honor, identified with pride, anger, self-aggrandizement, and glory, is a naturalistic notion."<sup>22</sup> In no way do the plays support this statement; a hero can be rightly proud of his better self, but at no moment is the sin of excessive pride accepted as such: Montezuma in The Indian Queen brings all kinds of misfortune upon himself and those he loves because of excessive pride. Pride is Almanzor's major shortcoming; it is the only fault Almahide sees in him and gently chides him for:

Might I not make it as my last request,  
That you would somewhat of your fierceness hide,  
That inborn fire — I do not call it pride? (IV,i)

Pride may be a common attribute of heroic heroes, but it is only when they subdue it that they act according to the laws of honor. As to "anger," it fares no better than pride. Rarely is it Aristotle's "ireful virtue"; more often than not it is a defect the hero must

overcome: "Compose these wilde Distempers in your breast; / Anger, like madness, is appeas'd by rest," says Acacia to Montezuma (I,1). Almanzor's predisposition to anger is certainly one of his major shortcomings; indignant at Boabdelin's treatment of Almahide, he refuses to help him:

Almahide: Unkind Almanzor, how am I betrayed  
Betrayed by him in whom I trusted most!

Almanzor: Oh, I have erred; but fury made me blind. (III,1)

As to "self-aggrandizement," if we agree that passion is to be subdued, then no case can be made for it. "Glory" raises a different problem; if we give it today's meaning, it could be a means to self-aggrandizement, but Miss Jean Gagen, partly answering Mr. Fujimura's article, retraces the history of the concept of honor and shows the "intimate connection between self-esteem and public esteem." Because of this connection, "A gentleman was obliged to protect his reputation, good name, credit, or fame, even at the cost of his life....It was right and proper to expect to have his merits recognized."<sup>23</sup> Glory is a natural consequence of virtue since "the virtues which the man of honor was obliged to practice, were primarily public virtues." When glory is a means to private ends, it is usually called ambition; Lyndaraxa, for instance, is ambitious:

Why would I be a queen?....  
Yes! I avow the ambition of my soul,  
To be that one to live without control. (II,1)

We can only reach a conclusion directly opposed to Mr. Fujimura's view that "Dryden's heroic plays, then, extol the primacy of passion,

and sex is glorified as the most powerful of human passions."<sup>24</sup>

Dryden's heroic plays extol the primacy of reason, and though sex may be the most powerful of human passions, it certainly is not glorified in the plays.

We have no reason to doubt that this primacy of reason was essentially Dryden's underlying idea in all the heroic plays, and we have to disagree with Mr. Bonamy Dobrée when he writes:

Indeed, if we seek in Dryden some definite message, or some special attitude we shall seek in vain. If this is a defect in him, it is one which he shares with Shakespeare. All that we can feel for certain in considering the two, is a difference in the wholeness of their attitude; we know that though both of them approached life in a multitude of ways, they approached it at different levels. We may suggest the difference roughly by saying that Shakespeare was metaphysical where Dryden was moral.<sup>25</sup>

Even if we leave aside the question of comparing and, a fortiori, likening Dryden and Shakespeare, there still seems to be a contradiction between what Dobrée says at the beginning of the quotation and the conclusion he arrives at: that there is no "definite message" or "special attitude" in Dryden and that Dryden is "moral." Anything "moral" implies the existence of a standard of values. It means condemnation or approval, the adoption of an "attitude" in accordance with that standard of values which by its very existence demands a "message." What Dryden's "attitude" and "message" are in the heroic plays we have said much too often already. As a matter of fact, one could justly reproach Dryden for the very repetitiousness of that message, the lack of diversity in his "controlling idea." It is this consistency of what Dryden calls the "fable" that is partly responsible

for the monotony of which critics, and most probably readers, complain in Dryden's plays. "The relation of plot to character is casual, not inevitable; the hero of one play differs very little from one of another," says J. W. Tupper.<sup>26</sup> If there is no relation between plot and character, why should there be no diversity in characterization? If Mr. Tupper's second statement does not contradict his first, it still does not explain it. But if, as we have shown, characterization and plot are closely linked, then, given a certain plot, or "fable," the hero can only belong to one type in all the plays. We have Dryden's own word that this is the method he followed:

For the moral (as Bossu observes) is the first business of the poet, as being the groundwork of his instruction. This being formed, he contrives such a design, or fable, as may be most suitable to the moral; after this he begins to think of the persons whom he is to employ in carrying on his design; and gives them the manners which are most proper to their several characters. The thoughts and words are the last parts, which give beauty and colouring to the piece.<sup>27</sup>

That plot and moral are closely linked in Dryden's mind is irrefutable. In the quotation just cited, taken from his essay, "A Parallel Between Poetry and Painting" (1695), he calls the moral the groundwork of a poem. In the Preface to Troilus and Cressida (1679), he held the same opinion: "'tis the moral that directs the whole action of the play to one centre; and that action or fable is the example built upon the moral, which confirms the truth of it to our experience: when the fable is designed, then, and not before, the persons are to be introduced, with their manners, characters, and passions."<sup>28</sup> For Dryden then, "moral" and "plot" or "fable" are the same, the plot being only the physical means by which a moral is carried out; and

character is part of the plot, an illustration of the moral. The moral being uniform, the character cannot vary either. As Pendlebury says, "There are only slight variations in the types and it would be almost impossible to distinguish the speeches of one hero from those of another, or indeed from those of a villain."<sup>29</sup> But like many other critics, Pendlebury attributes this to a lack of ability in characterization on Dryden's part: "Dryden certainly had the ability to invent an interesting story, whereas his power of creating character was slight."<sup>30</sup> Our contention is that, whatever his ability, Dryden is limited or handicapped in his characterization precisely because of the one moral, and consequent plot, he had chosen.

We have tried as much as possible not to rely on Dryden's own criticism as direct proof for what we find or are supposed to find in his plays. Dryden's critical works span the whole of his literary career; he has written widely and diversely on every literary topic of interest for him. He is not consistent in what he wrote since he treated one given topic at different times, and from different points of view. It would certainly be foolish to reproach him for that. When critics attempt to judge Dryden's work in the light of his criticism, they are more often than not dismayed by his lack of consistency; "If there is, on the whole, growth toward clearer vision and broader views, there is to the end, a lack of finality in what he says," is Margaret Sherwood's opinion.<sup>31</sup> When in need of a cohesive body of criticism, some critics limit themselves to a period, or to a limited number of works, a method which is at the very least

arbitrary.<sup>32</sup> It is rather easy to have Dryden on one's side since at one time or another he actually has been. Consequently, we shall refer to Dryden's criticism only to the extent that his opinion reinforces conclusions already reached; he shall be asked to complete a picture, not to be its mainstay.

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In short, a study of the plot and characterization in Dryden's heroic plays leads to a clear picture of the psychology of the hero: a passionate man who is, or will be eventually, in complete mastery of his passion by means of his reason. That same reason is his safe conduct to honor, which is an absolute submission to one or more sets of rules, worked out for the individual by the social structure surrounding him.

What gives validity to this final picture of the hero is that it fits perfectly, on the one hand, the period in which and for which it was created, and on the other, Dryden's own personal psychological evolution.

### CHAPTER III

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Chase, pp. 117, 121.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 192.

<sup>3</sup>Tupper, p. 585.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 617.

<sup>5</sup>Sherwood, p. 62.

<sup>6</sup>Tupper, p. 616.

<sup>7</sup>Hartsock, pp. 120, 117, 116.

<sup>8</sup>Dobree, Restoration Tragedy, p. 22.

<sup>9</sup>Dobree, Dryden, p. 18.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Jean Gagen, "Love and Honor in Dryden's Heroic Plays"; Curtis Watson, Shakespeare and the Renaissance Concept of Honor; also C. L. Barber, The Idea of Honour in English Drama - 1591-1700 (Goteborg, Sweden, 1957).

<sup>12</sup>Tupper, p. 594.

<sup>13</sup>Sherwood, p. 61.

<sup>14</sup>Tupper, p. 585.

<sup>15</sup>Pendlebury, p. 25.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>17</sup>M. W. Alssid, "Dryden's Rhymed Heroic Tragedies: A Critical Study of the Plays and Their Place in Dryden's Poetry," DA, XX, 3281.

<sup>18</sup>Dramatic Works, II, 331.



<sup>19</sup>Hartsock, p. 125.

<sup>20</sup>Fujimura, p. 39.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Gagen, p. 209.

<sup>24</sup>Fujimura, p. 40.

<sup>25</sup>Debrée, Restoration Tragedy, p. 94. Debrée is only one of many critics who hold this point of view; e.g., Margaret Sherwood in Dryden's Dramatic Theory and Practice, p. 12: "Dryden...has left an art, tentative, uncertain, held together neither by deep intellectual conviction nor by unconscious instinct, but showing a lack of controlling idea, a tendency to fall apart."

<sup>26</sup>Tupper, p. 602.

<sup>27</sup>Essays of John Dryden, ed. W. P. Ker (London, 1903), II, 127-128. This work is hereafter referred to as Essays.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., I, 213.

<sup>29</sup>Pendlebury, p. 115.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>31</sup>Sherwood, p. 12.

<sup>32</sup>Alssid, for instance, in his unpublished dissertation, already mentioned, concentrates on Dryden's "Of Heroic Plays."

## CHAPTER IV

### THE HEROIC PLAYS IN RELATION TO THE CONTEMPORARY INTELLECTUAL AND HISTORICAL MILIEU AND TO DRYDEN'S OWN PSYCHOLOGICAL EVOLUTION

Any attempt to give a fairly complete picture of intellectual thought contemporary with Dryden would be an ambitious, indeed impossible, endeavor which will not be undertaken here. There are, however, two major components of seventeenth and eighteenth century thought which have been widely recognized and studied: the hegemony of Reason and the strong current of scepticism.

The "Age of Reason" is a familiar enough appellation, though the French would rather apply it to their own seventeenth century, and the English to the neo-classical movement of the eighteenth century. That the nature of Reason is not the same in both centuries has also been widely recognized:

The eighteenth century takes reason in a different and more modest sense. It is no longer the sum total of 'innate ideas' given prior to all experience, which reveal the absolute essence of things. Reason is now looked upon rather as an acquisition than as a heritage. It is not the treasury of the mind in which the truth like a minted coin lies stored; it is rather the original intellectual force which guides the discovery and determination of Truth.<sup>1</sup>

Something happened between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to accomplish that change. The following is, of course, a gross simplification of what took place, and this sort of analysis is

always very hazardous, but sometimes the clarification gained justifies whatever distortion the final picture undergoes. What occurred was the superposition of sceptical thought on Cartesianism. That Cartesianism carried within itself its own death toll is beside the point for our purpose. What we are interested in is simply identifying these two currents and showing that the working of the one on the other really occurred at the end of the seventeenth century, approximately at the time when Dryden was writing his tragedies. Our contention is that these tragedies reflect not only both trends of thought but also the influence of Scepticism on Reason. In a masterful and at the same time delightful work, Paul Hazard has isolated and studied this movement which he pointedly called "La Crise de la Conscience Européenne."<sup>2</sup>

Hazard limits this period to the years 1680-1715, though he acknowledges the arbitrary nature of the dates, which are only convenient from the standpoint of those literary works produced which were particularly representative of that "crise." We have only to remember that Spinoza, Fontenelle, Locke, Leibnitz, Bossuet, Fénelon, and especially Bayle wrote during this period, to realize that a revolution in European thought was taking place. With reference to that period Hazard writes:

Entre la Renaissance dont elle procède directement et la Révolution française, qu'elle prépare, il n'y en a pas de plus importante dans l'histoire des idées. A une civilisation fondée sur l'idée du devoir, les devoirs envers Dieu, les devoirs envers le prince, les 'nouveaux philosophes' ont essayé de substituer une civilisation fondée sur l'idée du droit; les droits de la Conscience individuelle, les

droits de la critique, les droits de la raison, les droits de l'homme et du citoyen.<sup>3</sup>

This idea of duty by which Hazard characterizes European thought before the 1680's is precisely what we have encountered at every turn in Dryden's heroic tragedies; and the concept of right which he applies to eighteenth century thought is what is completely absent from these plays. The hero is the one who does his duty, by his king or his country, friend or love, father or son, but certainly not by his own self. What we have found is the denial of the self rather than its realization. Whenever the hero gets something for himself (the love of the heroine as a rule), it is as a reward for submitting every natural or instinctive impulse to the pressure of Reason, but never as a right that is won against contrary odds.

This aspect of the question would tend to make of Dryden's plays essentially seventeenth century manifestations. But it is precisely in the nature of that Reason which governs everything that we find reflected the undermining influence of the scepticism of the period: for that Reason is no longer the Cartesian Reason, though it still carries one of its main attributes--universality. As found in the plays we examined, Reason is still Cartesian in that it seems to be a faculty that exists in any and all persons; in case of conflict, the only solution is to dominate one's passion, and thereby open the way to Reason. Villain and hero refer to it in identical terms, and it is interchangeable from one person to another; when momentarily deprived of it, a hero acts like a villain, and when a villain is

won over to Reason, he attains "heroic" proportions. This Reason is infallible; one has only to listen to it.

"To listen to it" -- this is precisely the critical point where Reason in Dryden's plays is no more the Cartesian Reason. Granted that Cartesian Reason is universal, it is also personal, that is, used by the individual to work out his own issues and even the world's. It is the "je pense, donc je suis" aspect of Cartesianism that is completely lacking in our "heroic" hero. Never does he use his own reasoning faculty to work out his own problems. Tamburlaine and especially his alter ego, Faust, were closer to Cartesianism than Dryden's heroes. In Dryden, the "I think, therefore I am" is replaced by "I am because I do what I must." Essentially here, we have a distrust of personal Reason rather than an exaltation of it; whatever exaltation there is, is reserved to other people's Reason, or rather to society's rules and dicta which have withstood the test of time and need not be looked into and questioned. We are in the presence of a shifting of responsibility from the individual to society.<sup>4</sup> Reason is still there, but it is more a matter of exercise of the will than of common sense. The fact that the Cartesian virtue par excellence is also the exercise of the will does not contradict what has preceded. The problem is only a matter of emphasis. The Cartesian is the one who exercises his will in the light of his own Reason which is universal in that it is a common human attribute. Dryden's hero exercises his will in the light of rules and dicta issued for him by society which, if not infallible, is still more trustworthy

than himself.

This slight distortion which the concept of reason undergoes in the heroic plays is what illustrates their sceptical aspect.

Neo-classical Reason or common sense is usually linked with optimism. Francis Galloway speaks of "the optimism of the period" and insists on its corollary, the overall domination of common sense, though he points out some exceptions, among them Dryden:

There were always rebels against reason, for, as Swift knew, sanity and moderation have always had less general appeal than sentimentality and humbug. In the Prologue to Tyrannick Love (1669) Dryden proclaimed the right of men to be well deceived by heroic tragedy. Before he was in his grave the old gospel of Longinus, as interpreted by his disciple, Boileau, revealed the function of poetry to be the creation of ecstasy.<sup>5</sup>

We would again emphasize that one should refer to what Dryden did, rather than said, to judge his work. As we have seen, "sanity" and "moderation" are the virtues most exalted in the heroic plays, both in word and action. Even if we listen to what Dryden has to say on his own Tyrannick Love (neither in the Preface nor the Prologue does he use the word "deceive"), we shall find that his aim is not to "deceive" the reader in the modern sense, but to lure him to whatever moral he wants to impose upon him:

I consider that pleasure was not the only end of poesie.... By the Harmony of words, we elevate the mind to a sense of Devotion, as our solemn Musick, which is inarticulate poesie, does in churches; and by the lively images of piety, adorned by action, through the senses, allure the soul: which while it is charmed in a silent joy of what it sees and hears, is struck at the same time with a secret veneration of things Celestial, and is wound up insensibly into the practice of that which it admires.<sup>6</sup>

In the light of the above, when Dryden "deceives" his readers, it is for the purpose of winning them over to Reason; as Mr. Monk shows in his valuable study, The Sublime in Eighteenth Century England, the neo-classicists never considered the "creation of ecstasy" as the function of poetry.<sup>7</sup>

Boileau understood the sublime as a great thought capable of awakening strong emotions in the reader or the audience. The concept of the function of the drama as awakening emotions in the audience is at least as old as Aristotle. But these emotions in neo-classical criticism are not an end in themselves, only a means to an end. Longinus's key word is not ecstasy; it is "transport," the end being "high thoughts":

When, therefore, a thing is heard repeatedly by a man of intelligence, who is well versed in literature, and its effect is not to dispose the soul to high thoughts, and it does not leave in the mind more food for reflexion than the words seem to convey, but falls, if examined carefully through and through, into disesteem, it cannot rank as true sublimity because it does not survive a first hearing. For that is really great which bears a repeated examination...

Passion is not automatically part of the sublime; Longinus argues for it, but he does not put it first: "First and most important is the power of forming great conceptions....Secondly, there is vehement and inspired passion." In short, "sublimity is the echo of a great soul." The end to be attained is admiration:

In general, consider those examples of sublimity to be fine and genuine which please all and always. For when men of different pursuits, lives, ambitions, ages, languages, hold identical views on one and the same object, then that verdict which results, so to speak, from a concert of discordant

elements makes our faith in the object of admiration strong and unassailable....For it is not possible that men with mean and servile ideas and aims...should produce anything that is admirable and worthy of immortality....Hence also a bare idea, by itself and without a spoken word, sometimes excites admiration just because of the greatness of soul implied.<sup>8</sup>

Undoubtedly, then, admiration and not ecstasy is the response that should be incited by sublimity. This is how the neo-classicists understood Longinus. "Ecstasy" was a later acquisition of the eighteenth century.

The heroic paraphernalia (rhetorical flights, rants, bustling action, accumulation of climaxes, etc.) is what Dryden uses to "transport" his audiences and win them over to an ideal of reason and submission. In the light of what we know of Dryden, it is impossible to make of him, as Mr. Galloway does, a rebel against Reason. Though, as we have seen, his brand of reason is not typical of the early seventeenth century and even less the powerful tool which the eighteenth century made of it (Locke, Newton), it still is Reason, but stripped of its optimistic connotation.

La doctrine cartésienne procurait une certitude, une sécurité; elle opposait au scepticisme une retentissante affirmation; elle démontrait l'existence de Dieu, l'immatérialité de l'âme; elle distinguait la pensée d'avec l'étendue, la noble idée d'avec la sensation; elle marquait la victoire de la liberté sur l'instinct; bref elle était un rempart contre le libertinage. Or voici qu'elle affermissait le libertinage et le renforçait. Car elle préconisait l'examen, la critique; elle exigeait impérieusement l'évidence, même en des matières jadis soustraites par l'autorité aux lois de l'évidence.<sup>9</sup>

It is this questioning which Cartesianism carried within itself that was eventually to be used against it. In most cases this questioning did not lead to either despair or Pyrrhonism; Spinoza, Leibnitz,



the Cambridge Platonists, and especially Locke are instances of opposition to Pyrrhonism. Bayle, however, came very close to Pyrrhonism, and Pascal, the Cartesian thinker par excellence, could only escape despair through faith.

Dryden also had passed the point of questioning. A question implies an answer. In Dryden's plays the hero asks no questions for he expects no answers. To question, to doubt, is too hazardous; one may come up with the wrong answers. When authority is present to guarantee security through the maintenance of a status quo, why change to worse evils? To support this status quo is, in fine, the "heroic" hero's vocation.

Once more let us listen to Dryden: "And I meddle not with others, being, for my opinion, of Montaigne's principles, that an honest man ought to be contented with that form of government, and with those fundamental constitutions of it, which he received from his ancestors and under which himself was born."<sup>10</sup> This attitude is, of course, characteristic of Pyrrhonism. Dryden's adherence to the status quo in political matters leads us to examine another aspect of the close relationship between the heroic tragedy and the period: the political and historical "moment."

To make our point, it is necessary to go back approximately fifty years in time and cross the Channel to France. Then and there we witness the éclosion of the French heroic tragedy. Corneille's Le Cid, a full-fledged representative of the genre, was first produced in 1636. What were the political circumstances before and at the

time of Le Cid? In France, the second half of the sixteenth century was a period of great instability; religious wars, especially, brought France to the brink of total ruin. Weak kings and strong feudal lords kept the political scene in a state of constant effervescence. When Henri IV decided that "Paris vaut bien une messe" and turned Catholic to gain a crown, France, under his reign, began to breathe more freely. Slowly, patiently, Henri IV was working at rebuilding France in a climate of tolerance and at fulfilling his aim of providing every peasant with a fat hen for his Sunday cooking pot when he was assassinated by Ravallac in 1610. Once more France was in the hands of a child-King, his scheming Italian mother and her paramours. Once more the vassals raised their heads and began tearing at the kingdom. But Richelieu was there. With an iron-hand and sheer Machiavellian statesmanship he crushed the vassals one by one, and worked relentlessly for a united France under the yoke of an absolute monarch. Richelieu was not loved, by any means. His scheming mind, his driving thirst for power, his greed (at his death he was the richest man in France not excepting the King) brought him nothing but hate, and the King, who obeyed him most readily, hated him most heartily. But he was appreciated, and at his death in 1642, one year before the death of Louis XIII, his absence was keenly felt. Those who appreciated and accepted Richelieu were the very same who went to the theater and thrilled at Corneille's plays, for these plays were fulfilling their needs in the same manner in which Richelieu was fulfilling them. Weary of quarrels, turmoil, uncertainty and insecurity, they found in

the heroic play an ideal of order, of duty, of submission to authority. They did not find any questioning or search for psychological motivations, and they did not care to find them. Furthermore, this ideal of duty to King, God and country was couched in the most stirring rhetoric, illustrated by glorious feats of valor amid the bustle of war, which, let us not forget, was part of the audience's every day life; a nobleman was first of all a soldier, and counting the "noblesse de province," half of France belonged to the nobility. When Richelieu died, his work was certainly not finished, and the Regency was far from feeling itself absolute. What with the Fronde on one hand and the impudent rabble of Paris on the other and especially that dashing, daring and "heroic" cousin of his, the Prince de Condé, poor Louis XIV had to go into hiding no less than three times before a succession of able ministers consolidated his power and made of him "le Roi Soleil." During this entire period Corneille was the unquestioned master playwright, and the heroic tragedy thrived.

Let us now return to England. On the whole, it had fared better during the second half of the sixteenth century under Elizabeth I. The seventeenth century, however, was far from maintaining whatever stability had been achieved up until then. The political events are much too familiar to require recapitulation. Suffice it to say that after the Commonwealth when England called back Charles II, it was in very much the same state as France had been in 1610. It had had its fill of wars, factions, revolutions and so forth. It craved

order, security and authority. The heroic tragedy, in its own way, tried to provide exactly these elements: to present its audience with an ideal of order, of sanity, based on a submission to social authority that exalted nothing more than the concept of duty. The glory, the excitement, the battles, the rhetorical flights were nothing but the "garb," meant only to stir the spectator and "lure" him over to duty.

In this near identity of political and historical circumstances surrounding the heroic tragedy, both in France and in England, lies probably the answer as to why Dryden wrote Cornelian plays in Racine's time. Corneille was still writing, of course, and writing the same kind of tragedies, but his popularity had declined. The decline was not based on the quality of his work; he was being faithful to his own genius and his own standards; his audience was not being faithful to him. It had gone over to Racine. Why? We believe that, here, the historical "moment" is very important. Monarchy was finally absolute. Order and security were everywhere. France had reached its apogee. Questions of authority, order and submission were no more paramount; they had been solved. The "noble" man was no more a fightingvassal, but a courtier tied to Versailles, with time on his hands -- time enough to look into himself and into his passions, to indulge in minute psychological motivations, and to witness the devastation of souls rather than of kingdoms. Corneille was still writing for the audiences of the 1630's; he could not be appreciated by the French audiences of the 1670's; but he could be, in England,

where the political atmosphere was the same as that of fifty years before in France, and where Dryden was producing his kind of drama. Dryden knew Racine, but he never showed any sympathy or appreciation for his work. Dryden's attack on Racine in the Preface to All for Love is well known. "Thus their Hippolytus is so scrupulous in point of decency that he will rather expose himself to death than accuse his stepmother to his father." Dryden either purposely or not chooses to distort Hypolytus's motive: not to hurt his father. Also, Hypolytus did not know he would die, while Dryden in his own Aureng-Zebe makes the hero choose death rather than reveal to his father Nourmahal's incestuous advances. The parallel lack of appreciation of Racine by Dryden's contemporaries has been treated masterfully by Miss Katherine E. Wheatley in her Racine and English Classicism, in which she also shows how Racine has continued to be misunderstood by Anglo-Saxon critics and readers down to the present day: "It might be said that English neo-classicism completely passed over the Racinian moment in French classical tragedy."<sup>11</sup> Miss Wheatley believes it is because the "English read French theory in preference to French dramatists." Her nearly exhaustive research on French critical theory validates her point. Yet Corneille's dramatic work was read and appreciated, while Racine's was not. We believe that what we have called the historical "moment" played a decisive part in this question: English audiences misread Racine because they were not ready for him; they did not need him whereas they still needed Corneille.

Our conclusion then is that Dryden was writing the kind of drama

that not only pleased his audiences and embodied their needs, but also reflected some of the major problems which confronted the age.

\* \* \*

If we turn now to Dryden himself, we shall find that the conclusions made earlier in this study do not conflict with his own psychological formation as we know it. The following is heavily indebted to Mr. Louis Bredvold's study on Dryden which is now widely accepted by critics.<sup>12</sup> Essentially, Mr. Bredvold's well-known thesis is that Dryden was a sceptic whose Pyrrhonism drove him to conservatism in politics and to Catholicism through fideism in religion. If one disagrees with some of Mr. Bredvold's statements and conclusions, there can be no doubt, nevertheless, as to the essential soundness of his position:

He [Dryden] lived in an age of philosophical skepticism; every reader of any pretensions to cultivation knew Montaigne and Charron intimately and almost every scholar had read Sextus Empiricus. Neither Dryden nor his age can be fully understood apart from this Pyrrhonism, diffused in every department of thought, lending itself to the most diverse purposes, appearing sometimes in strange guises.<sup>13</sup>

Though we agree on the whole with Mr. Bredvold's statement, it seems rather sweeping. Dryden's age was not solely an age of scepticism; Spinoza, Leibnitz, Locke, and even Hobbes were not sceptics. They certainly were not Pyrrhonists. Mr. Bredvold seems to use the two terms interchangeably. If they are to have the same meaning, then where does that leave libertinism? We believe that scepticism as an attitude favoring questioning and relying heavily on libertinism, was "diffused in every department of thought," but that Pyrrhonism as a

philosophical system exhorting ultra-conservatism was not as diffused as Mr. Bredvold seems to imply. After tracing the traditions of scepticism in European thought down to Dryden's time, Mr. Bredvold studies the related philosophical systems of Hobbes's materialism, examines the Royal Society's philosophical attitudes and Thomas Browne's scepticism in Religio Medici. He shows Dryden's affinity to the attitude of the Royal Society and concludes: "It was this distrust of reason, this philosophical skepticism that drove Dryden toward conservatism and authority in religion, and ultimately to the Catholic Church, just as his distrust of the populace was one reason for his increasing conservatism and Toryism in politics."<sup>14</sup> Mr. Bredvold next devotes a whole chapter to Roman Catholic apologetics in England and stresses their heavy reliance on fideism even though fideism as such was considered a heresy by the Church itself: "Roman Catholic propagandists, who were sensitive to the new intellectual atmosphere and desired to conduct their controversies with intellectual as well as social finesse, put their emphasis on fideism and traditionalism as never before."<sup>15</sup> Bredvold gives Father Simon's Histoire critique du Vieux Testament a prominent rank among the diverse influences playing on Dryden, as undoubtedly it had. Father Simon, whom Paul Hazard calls the "erudit" par excellence, the first great compiler, meant to deal a major blow to Protestantism by showing the unreliability of the Bible. That he was at the same time dealing an equal blow to Roman Catholicism is a question that he seems to have overlooked. At any rate, Dryden understood both destructive

aspects of the work, and his fideistic tendencies could only have been reinforced by it. Mr. Bredvold does not, however, disregard the appeal that Reason had for Dryden, but he contends that "the rationalistic tendency in Dryden evidently did not develop very freely or very far; it must inevitably have been inhibited by that Pyrrhonic turn of his mind, indications of which are scattered throughout his writings."<sup>16</sup> He goes on to analyze in detail Religio Laici and The Hind and the Panther, shows how "both are basically skeptical and fideistic," and concludes that Dryden's "shifts of allegiance were all changes in the same direction, toward greater conservatism....His assent to Catholicism was more in the nature of a retreat to an impregnable fortification when the more forward position had been proved untenable."<sup>17</sup> Turning to Dryden's political position, Bredvold notes the close connection of conservatism and scepticism in politics. He shows how Dryden must have been attracted by Hobbes's absolutist political theory. But Dryden's very distrust of reason kept him from adhering to the theory of determinism underlying the concept of absolutism. He believed in authority and absolute monarchy, but we shall see later on, how, in the plays, Dryden modifies somehow this concept and takes all Hobbesianism away from it. Noting the instances of Hobbesian absolutist theory, Mr. Bredvold says:

Dryden may be said to have reflected the political ideas of that philosopher [Hobbes] in his plays....But it may be fairly questioned whether this strained political declamation in Dryden's heroic drama is anything more than plastered decoration....In an earlier chapter we have hesitated to impute to Dryden an adherence to the philosophical conception of determinism which is so frequently debated in his plays. It



is likewise neither necessary nor advisable to take his characters literally as his mouthpieces on political theory.<sup>18</sup>

Defining the concept of absolute monarchy, Mr. Bredvold rightly says, "What the doctrine really meant in the time of Dryden was that there must be in government an ultimate authority beyond which there can be no appeal. When that authority has spoken, it cannot be impugned or brought to trial for its decision without crumbling the fabric of government."<sup>19</sup>

Dryden was then a man who, through a scepticism natural to his temperament and present in the age, was eventually led on to Catholicism in religion and Toryism in politics. The conclusions we have reached regarding Dryden's hero and heroic plays do not contradict this portrait of Dryden, but, on the contrary, support it.

Bredvold says: "That Dryden, true to the traditions of scepticism, shared this distrust of human nature [Montaigne's distrust] is obvious to the most cursory reader of his political poems."<sup>20</sup> This also is, or should be, obvious to the reader of the heroic plays. As we have seen, the hero is to shun his passions and obey reason, but this reason is a set of rules which society imposes on him. Responsibility is shifted from the individual to society; Dryden not only distrusts the individual's natural impulses, but he does not even trust his reason.

In a recent article, Mr. J. A. Winterbottom stresses the predominance of Stoic philosophy in Dryden's tragedies. He notes the interest and admiration which Stoicism had been attracting in England for

over a hundred years, and Dryden's own praise of the virtues of humiliation, resignation and contempt for the world interspersed in his writings. Though Mr. Winterbottom acknowledges that these virtues are as much Christian as Stoic,<sup>21</sup> he nevertheless finds that Dryden's tragedies are a showplace for Stoic philosophy. Mr. Winterbottom's arguments are interesting and in some instances convincing; yet on the whole his stand must be rejected. To illustrate his point, he says of Montezuma in The Indian Emperor, "yet even so abandoned a character as Montezuma is capable of flashes of Stoical behavior."<sup>22</sup> The word "flashes" is right since the overall impression which Montezuma conveys is one of abandon to one's passions rather than of Stoical restraint. Mr. Winterbottom takes up Maximin next:

In Tyrannick Love...appears the Emperor Maximin, Dryden's first fully developed Marlovian hero. With his monstrous desires, his ruthless treatment of those who oppose him, and his addiction to rant, he is in every way the counterpart of Tamburlaine. His character is, of course, unalloyed by any hint of Stoicism, but like other writers of heroic tragedies, Dryden indicates his disapproval of the heroic personality by placing it in a context which includes some elements of that philosophy.<sup>23</sup>

Much of what is quoted here has more or less been answered in the body of this study: Maximin is not "in every way a counterpart of Tamburlaine." How can he be if Tamburlaine is all will and Maximin has none? On the other hand, Dryden's "disapproval of the heroic personality" is a statement that needs clarification. The object of our study was partly to arrive at a definition of the heroic temper. Our conclusion, based on the plays considered as drama and action and not as a rostrum for diverse opinions, was that the hero was the one

who obeyed reason, curbed his passions and denied himself for society. This picture does not contradict the innumerable instances in which Dryden states that the hero is to be imitated, to be admired. To have Dryden disapprove of the heroical temper would be to go counter to the all-powerful neo-classical concept of the utilitarian end of art. We are all familiar with the process by which the Aristotelian concept of Catharsis, through Horace, was transformed by fifteenth and sixteenth century Italian commentators into the "teach and delight" theory which, from Sidney down, was held as an absolute rule by the Renaissance and the neo-classical movement.<sup>24</sup> The main new element brought in by this transformation was the notion of admiration and its corollary, poetic justice; a hero is to be admired in order to prompt imitation. If he is to be admired, he has to be virtuous; if virtuous, how can he be punished? This is one of the reasons why we cannot accept Maximin as hero of Tyrannic Love.

The perfection of such stage characters consists chiefly in their likeness to the deficient faulty nature, which is their original; only...in such cases...there will always be found a better likeness and a worse, and the better is constantly to be chosen; I mean in tragedy, which represents the figures of the highest form among mankind....Tis true that all manner of imperfections must not be taken away from the characters; and the reason is that there may be left some grounds of pity for their misfortunes; wicked they would be hated, saintly, their misery would bring on accusation of injustice against heaven ....Thus in a tragedy...the hero of the piece must be advanced foremost to the view of the reader, or the spectator: he must outshine the rest of all the characters; he must appear the prince of them, like the sun in the Copernican system, encompassed with the less noble planets.<sup>25</sup>

In Dryden's hands, the Aristotelian notion of the tragic flaw becomes merely "specks of frailty and deficiency."<sup>26</sup> If there had been no

alternative to Maximin, we would have had to admit that Dryden does the contrary of what he preaches, but we already have seen how Porphyrius is in every way a hero to be admired, what we call a "heroical" hero. It is only if one insists on qualifying Maximin as "heroic" that one is led to conclude that Dryden disapproved of "heroic" heroes. It seems more logical to assume that the "heroic" is something different from and opposed to Maximin. Consequently, the Stoicism which Mr. Winterbottom sees reflected in the evolution of the hero from the Montezuma-Maximin type, to the Aureng-Zebe type (Almanzor being the turning point) does not exist according to our premises; the Montezuma of The Indian Emperor is the prototype of the emperor in Aureng-Zebe and Maximin is Nourmahal's alter-ego. Speaking of the heroic tragedy Mr. Winterbottom contends that:

...in Dryden's hands the genre actually became a means of subtly negating the very force which gave it life. The heroic temperament is gradually trimmed and finally tamed, and the Marlovian hero who had looked on the community variously as slaves, victims, and spectators, finally accepts it as an object worthy of his devotion.<sup>27</sup>

We believe that the heroic temperament was not gradually trimmed because it never did need trimming in the first place, since Cortez, Guyomar and Porphyrius belong to Dryden's very first heroic tragedies and were prototypes repeated in Almanzor and Aureng-Zebe. We also believe that the "heroic" hero was never essentially Marlovian, that he did not "finally" accept the community as an object of devotion but had done so from the beginning (Cortez, Guyomar, Porphyrius). The essential difference between the point of view held all along in this study and Mr. Winterbottom's may be more readily understood

when he says that Dryden "assumed that the passions, though powerful, can be controlled. This assumption in itself did much to shatter the mystique surrounding the hero whose passions were usually considered to be irresistible."<sup>28</sup> Our conclusion is that no heroic play of Dryden contends that the hero's passions are irresistible, but that on the contrary a hero is a hero only to the extent that he controls his passions. Mr. Winterbottom explains that Dryden reverted to Stoicism because he felt that "ancient articles of faith" (sense of honor, bond between father and child, duties of obedience on the part of the subject, of solicitude on the part of the ruler) "could no longer be accepted without question," and that Dryden "seemed unable to give himself wholly to either conservative or liberal thought."<sup>29</sup> We have tried to show that in the heroic plays Dryden was completely won over to conservatism. Mr. Winterbottom asks: "Within the tragedies, then, what code of behavior could be offered both for the able individual who was quite prepared to violate sanctified social and political forms in his quest for power and for the weaker individuals who merely suffered amid the contention for power?"<sup>30</sup> His answer is Stoicism. However, in both the types he describes, we do not recognize our hero, as we have seen him in the plays; the individual prepared to "violate sanctified social and political forms in his quest for power" is not the hero but the anti-hero, that is, the villain. But even if we disregard the plays, Stoicism as such does not fit in with Dryden's scepticism. Essentially, Stoicism is dogmatic and optimistic. In Stoics and Sceptics, Edwyn

Bevan, throughout his study, implies that Stoicism, whenever it took the upper hand as a philosophical system, did so as a reaction to scepticism: "Stoicism, as it appears to me, was a system put together hastily, violently, to meet a desperate emergency," this emergency being "the scepticism which had become general in the Greek schools with the activity of speculation and the Sophistic movement." The doctrine of certainty in Stoicism, "the necessity...to give a complete answer to the enigma of the universe, compact in all its parts, since nothing which left any room for doubt to get in could give a bewildered world security and guidance....It was for the faith in Providence above all else that the Stoic stood in the ancient world."<sup>31</sup> "The Stoics attempted to frame a theory of the physical universe, of the individual man as he finds himself under compulsion in this universe and, combining the two, to formulate a rule of life in conformity with Reason," says Mr. Wenley.<sup>32</sup> We can see by this definition how Stoicism could be mistaken for the trends we tried to identify in Dryden's plays. But the dogma, the certainty, the explanatory content of Stoicism are what make it improbable as a framework for these plays. To cite Mr. Wenley again: "Given a dumb and deaf deity, the theory [Stoicism] ends in apotheosis of personal reason, and each individual becomes his own God."<sup>33</sup> Here we recognize neither Dryden nor the "heroic" hero.

Rather than identify the virtues of humility, resignation and contempt for the world with Stoicism, we would prefer to give them their Christian connotation. It is from this angle that an evaluation

of the hero is offered here. This is of course a very subjective interpretation, but it seems logical, if the conclusions arrived at in the preceding chapters have any validity. Looking at the hero, in the light of these conclusions, the quality which appears to be the most striking is that of self-denial. One of Dryden's definitions of a hero includes "...piety to the Gods and a dutiful affection to his father, love to his relations, care of his people, courage and conduct in the wars, gratitude to those who had obliged him, and justice in general to mankind."<sup>34</sup> We have here the portrait of a hero in what we may call his "positive" aspect: what he does or is supposed to do. The other side of this "positive" is what interests us here, and the heroic tragedies throw more light on that other side than Dryden's definition. This definition shows the hero performing his duties by others; the tragedies show him also as denying himself everything. This denial of the self is what makes of the hero not just a Stoic, not just a Christian, but mainly a Roman Catholic Christian. What is in question here is not, of course, the material or physical but the spiritual realm of things. The Stoic relies on himself. So does ultimately the Protestant since he finds his God in himself or through himself. But the Roman Catholic Christian is the one who exercises the virtues of humility and resignation to the extent that he can wholly and completely deliver himself up to authority (the authority of the Church).

To stretch this point would be awkward and unjustified. The "heroic" hero is, of course, not a "Catholic" hero and Dryden would

no doubt be astonished to hear him qualified as such. The only validity of such an evaluation resides in the sense of completeness it gives to conclusions already reached. In view of Dryden's ultimate conversion to Catholicism, it seems pertinent to note that already in the heroic tragedies, his heroes reflect Roman Catholic ideology. It is also valid in answer to such statements as "the heroic play of Dryden is essentially a naturalistic and in part a romantic revolt against Christian humanism" -- which in another part of the same essay is defined as emphasizing "man's rationality and his control of the passions."<sup>35</sup>



## CHAPTER IV

### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Ernst Cassirer, The Mind of the Enlightenment, trans. Fritz C. A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove (Princeton, 1951)

<sup>2</sup>Paul Hazard, La Crise de la Conscience Européenne (Paris, 1935).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., I, iv.

<sup>4</sup>Terms are often misinterpreted. The "individual" here is, of course, given its classical connotation of "typical" or "universal," and is not the personal individual of romanticism.

<sup>5</sup>Francis Galloway, Reason, Rule and Revolt in English Classicism (New York, 1940), p. 21.

<sup>6</sup>Dramatic Works, II, 330.

<sup>7</sup>Samuel H. Monk, The Sublime in Eighteenth Century England (New York, 1935), pp. 10-42.

<sup>8</sup>The Great Critics, compiled and ed. James Harry Smith and Edd Winfield Parks (New York, 1932), pp. 70-72.

<sup>9</sup>Hazard, I, 175.

<sup>10</sup>Essays, II, 171.

<sup>11</sup>Katherine E. Wheatley, Racine and English Classicism (Austin, 1956), p. 234.

<sup>12</sup>Louis I. Bredvold, The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden (Ann Arbor, 1934)

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>21</sup>Cf. E. Vernon Arnold's Roman Stoicism (Cambridge, 1911) on the interrelation of Stoicism and Christianity, pp. 408-436.

<sup>22</sup>J. A. Winterbottom, "Stoicism in Dryden's Tragedies," JEGP, LXI, 4 (October 1962), 872.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 873.

<sup>24</sup>Cf. Marvin T. Herrick, The Fusion of Horatian and Aristotelian Literary Criticism, 1531-1555, Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, XXXII (Urbana, 1934); Clarence C. Green, The Neo-Classical Theory in England during the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge, Mass., 1934); C. F. Deane, Dramatic Theory and the Rhymed Heroic Play, already cited; J. W. H. Atkins, English Literary Criticism: Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (London, 1951), pp. 7-12.

<sup>25</sup>Essays, II, 125, 126, 143.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>27</sup>Winterbottom, p. 882.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 883.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Edwin Bevan, Stoics and Sceptics (Oxford, 1913), pp. 33, 34, 32, 44.

<sup>32</sup>R. M. Wenley, Stoicism and Its Influences (New York, 1927), p. 75.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>34</sup>Essays, II, 177. Dryden is speaking here of an epic hero, referring especially to Aeneas, but we know how he considered tragedy and epic as closely related genres.

<sup>35</sup>Fujimura, pp. 48, 40.

## CHAPTER V

### THE HERO IN DRYDEN'S OTHER SERIOUS PLOTS

As pointed out at the beginning of Chapter II, the present body of criticism on Dryden's dramatic work seems to set a line of demarcation between the plays we have examined in the preceding chapters and the rest of Dryden's serious plays. Exactly how these other plays differ from the heroic plays is not made very clear. However, they are never referred to as "heroic plays" but as "tragedies." The heroic play is said to have culminated in The Conquest of Granada. Speaking of the heroic play as a literary genre, McKillop believes that "the movement dies down in the late 1670's, but leaves a legacy of turgidity and rant to later English tragedy. The heroic play may be described as a deliberate attempt to be romantic and heroic in an unromantic and unheroic age, an age that was drawing a sharp line between imagination and reason."<sup>1</sup> All for Love is commonly assumed to be a "turning point," a rejection of the heroic genre, a "return to Shakespeare," whatever that may mean. Dobrée, in his Restoration Tragedy, analyzes minutely All for Love in a separate chapter from the one he devotes to Dryden, and seems to consider that play, which he calls Dryden's "masterpiece," not only as superior to but different from the rest of his dramatic works. Pendlebury's opinion is that in this play Dryden "rejected at once the fetters of rhyme and

the heroic conception of the drama. Dryden's example being followed in a short time by Otway, the heroic play disappeared from the English stage."<sup>2</sup> "When in All for Love (1678)," says Nettleton, "he [Dryden] turned to blank verse and a Shakespearean theme, rhymed heroic drama has had its day and practically ceased to be."<sup>3</sup> Margaret Sherwood, in the work we have examined, analyzes in three successive chapters Dryden's comedies, Dryden's heroic plays, and Dryden's tragedies, and she places All for Love among the tragedies. Cecil V. Deane stresses the point that actually the heroic play is a phenomenon occurring over a very short span of time.<sup>4</sup> More recent criticism does not change this picture appreciably.

It is clear then that Dryden wrote different kinds of tragedy: the heroic plays, the tragedies proper, and the serious plots of his tragi-comedies.<sup>5</sup> Our purpose is not, of course, to prove that the tragedies are heroic plays. However, in our study of Dryden's heroic plays we have examined the heroic hero and arrived at a certain definite characterization which we have found repeated over and over in these plays. Our contention is that, if we now turn to Dryden's tragedies and serious plots in the tragi-comedies, we shall find that the hero in these plays displays essentially the same basic characterization as in the heroic plays. We shall find the same motivations, the same scale of values, the same conception of character, in one word, the same "type" here as in the heroic plays. To put it differently, Dryden's hero in the heroic plays is also his hero in his other serious plays. There may be a slight shift in emphasis,



of behavior:

Just, just his nature.  
 Virtue's his path; but sometimes 'tis too narrow  
 For his vast soul; and then he starts out wide,  
 And bounds into a vice that bears him far  
 From his first course and plunges him in ills;  
 But when his danger makes him find his fault,  
 Quick to observe, and full of sharp remorse,  
 He censures eagerly his own misdeeds,  
 Judging himself with malice to himself,  
 And not forgiving what as man he did,  
 Because his other parts are more than man.--  
 He must not thus be lost. (I,1, 124-135)

In this description by Ventidius, it is not hard to recognize our hero. Anthony is essentially virtuous, but he has a "vast soul." Ventidius is definitely not praising this vastness of the soul since it is what leads Anthony "into a vice that bears him far / From his first course." Anthony has the awareness we have found in all of Dryden's heroes; he knows what is right and what is wrong: "Quick to observe, and full of sharp remorse, / He censures eagerly his own misdeeds." Anthony is cut from the pattern of the heroic heroes; there is nothing Aristotelian or Shakespearean about him. He is not a great man brought to his downfall by a tragic flaw to which he is blind. Lear is great because he has a vast soul, the very quality which is failing in Anthony, but he is not virtuous. The most important difference, however, is the awareness which Anthony has and which Lear lacks: Lear would be incapable, at the start of the play, of comprehending his eventual downfall, even if he were able to see the events that lead to it projected on a screen. This awareness or consciousness, is the very thing into which he grows all through the play and which makes of him every inch a King. The

nature of that awareness is, of course, not the same in both these characters; as we shall see, Anthony's is an a priori knowledge of dicta and rules for conduct which make it easy for him to give a value judgment. If an act is in accordance with these rules, it is right; if not, it is wrong. The awareness Lear gains has nothing to do with an external scale of values; it is something that is bred in him through a destructive process of awakening which actually leaves him raving mad: all the familiar and reliable points de repère have to be torn down before they are replaced by a different scale of values, inborn and inbred. It is characteristic that the "every inch a King" is applied to him when he walks mad on the shore, but it is a perfectly fitting moment since he is then the living proof of the conflict he has resolved in himself.

Another aspect which differentiates these two types of awareness is that since Anthony's is an a priori and external one, it is absolute, is unchangeable, and yields judgments in either black or white. But Lear's never ceases to grow. There is not one precise moment at which Lear gains knowledge of what is right or wrong, as such, and can tell himself: "From now on, I know what to do." On the contrary, the more his personality broadens, the less he feels he knows; he actually becomes aware of knowing nothing. The greater he becomes, the less dogmatic he is. His last words are still words of bewilderment: "Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life, / And thou no breath at all?"<sup>7</sup>

But neo-classicism did not ask questions it could not answer; it

had devised a pattern of answers and asked only the questions which fitted into that pattern. The notion of poetic justice seems to have been evolved precisely in that context: retribution is to follow crime, but it should be scaled to that crime. In a perfectly ordered world, villains are punished and the good are rewarded; when the good manifest what Dryden calls "frailty," they are punished, too, but never in excess of what their crime deserves. In his Preface to All for Love Dryden says he chose his subject because of the "excellency of the Moral. For the chief persons represented were famous patterns of unlawful love; and their end accordingly was unfortunate. All reasonable men have long since concluded, that the hero of the poem ought not to be a character of perfect virtue, for then he could not, without injustice, be made unhappy; nor yet altogether wicked, because he could not then be pittied."<sup>8</sup> Most of all, the rule of poetic justice applies to the innocent since as Dryden says in his essay "Of Poetry and Painting," already cited, if a perfect character is punished, "his or her misfortunes would produce impious thoughts in the beholders; they would accuse the heavens of injustice..."<sup>9</sup> When the neo-classicists married Cordelia off to Edgar, they were not just trying to please the larger public; the whole concept of an innocent punished for crimes he did not commit was incomprehensible to them. It destroyed their whole well-organized world. Cordelia's death was unnecessary and so was Lear's. After all, the man had only made, out of rashness, a mistake in judgment and had been adequately punished for it. Why kill him off along with his poor



innocent lovely daughter? But then, what could one expect of the Elizabethans, "when men were dull, and conversations low....If love and honour now are higher raised / 'Tis not the poet, but the age is raised," says Dryden.<sup>10</sup> Shakespeare's age was "an age less polished, more unskilled"<sup>11</sup> and could not be expected to understand the niceties of poetic justice and decorum. A civilized age owes it to itself to delight only in violence sanctioned by moral laws, and not in violence for its own sake.

In Shakespeare's case, Thomas Rymer's judgments are notoriously "infamous." Yet, Rymer undoubtedly was representative of his age. He just happened to be that rare phenomenon, a spectator completely impervious to Shakespeare. But the basic principles on which he opposed him are those of his age. Rymer's analysis of Othello, a masterpiece in its own way, is enlightening. The first thing he looks for is the "Moral," and he seems to find it difficult to pinpoint. Whether tongue-in-cheek or not, he summarizes the different possibilities: "First, this may be a caution to all Maidens of Quality how, without their Parents consent, they run away with Black-amoores....Secondly, this may be a warning to all good Wives, that they look well to their Linnen....Thirdly, this may be a lesson to Husbands, that before their Jealousie be Tragical, the proofs may be Mathematical."<sup>12</sup> Evidently, Rymer has completely missed whatever Othello has to give. Why? What strikes Rymer most are what he calls the improbabilities. The mechanical, logical errors of the play are not in question here, of course, though he dwells on them at

some length. What seems to upset him is that things are not what one would expect them to be. How can Desdemona fall in love with a "negro"? "All this is very strange. And therefore pleases such as reflect not on the improbability. This match may well be without the parents Consent....The Characters or Manners, which are the second part in a Tragedy, are not less unnatural and improper, than the Fable was improbable and absurd."<sup>13</sup> Rymer is most bothered by the character of Iago. Iago is a soldier; everyone knows what a soldier is or should be; so does Shakespeare, "but to entertain the Audience with something new and surprising, against common sense, and Nature, he would pass upon us a close, dissembling, false, insinuating rascal, instead of an open-hearted, frank, plain dealing Souldier, a character constantly worn by them for some thousands of years in the World."<sup>14</sup> This need for the common, the familiar, the expected, the yearning for rules which are a haven where one can find security, as reflected in this passage, belong to the very spiritual climate in which the hero of the heroic play felt at home. That same climate could only breed the concept of poetic justice. Given his own ideology, poor Rymer is understandably puzzled:

Rather may we ask here what unnatural crime Desdemona, or her parents had committed, to bring this judgment, down upon her; to Wed a Black-amoor, and innocent to be thus cruelly murdered by him. What instruction can we make out of this catastrophe? Or whither must our reflection lead us? Is not this to envenome and sour our spirits, to make us repine and grumble at Providence; and the government of the World? If this be our end, what boots it to be Virtuous?<sup>15</sup>

This same principle of poetic justice applies in Anthony's case.

Anthony's end is tragic; consequently, he should be guilty; guilt can only be assumed when knowledge is present; hence Anthony is not blind to his own nature as Othello is. He knows his crime, what he has to pay for it, and why he committed it. Dryden, in the preface to the play, makes this point very clear: "...for the crime of love, which they both committed, were not occasioned by any necessity or fatal ignorance, but were wholly voluntary; since our passions are, or ought to be, within our power."<sup>16</sup> In the very first scene where Anthony and Ventidius fall tearfully into each other's arms, Anthony confesses:

But I have lost my reason, have disgraced  
The name of soldier with inglorious ease.  
(I,1, 293-294)

When he asks Ventidius to curse him, the latter refuses because:

You are too sensible already  
Of what you've done, too conscious of your failings.  
(I,1, 312-313)

When Ventidius blames Cleopatra, the friends quarrel but Anthony quickly acknowledges that deep inside he feels likewise:

Pr'y thee, forgive me.  
Why didst thou tempt my anger by discovery  
Of what I would not hear?

The scene, which ends the first act, has Anthony pledge to reform:

The praises were unjust, but I'll deserve them,  
And yet mend all. Do with me what thou wilt;

He will leave Cleopatra "Though Heaven knows I love / Beyond life, conquest, empire, all but honor;" This resolution draws Ventidius's commendation:

Methinks you breathe  
 Another soul. Your looks are more divine;  
 You speak a hero, and you move a god. (I,1, 398-340)

It is interesting to pause for a moment at the end of this first act and consider the play from the point of view of technical play-writing. The most important feature of this play is that the plot or story or what Dryden calls the "fable," is well known. The "what happens" question is already answered as far as the spectator is concerned: Anthony is not going to shake off his fascination for Cleopatra and both lovers are going to die. The type of suspense lacking here is certainly not necessary to a play since the "how does it happen" can be a more interesting problem. The "how" question itself can be considered from at least two points of view: the obvious one involving external events, which can be of little interest since the end is known, and the one that involves a study of what goes on inside a character, his motivations, his whole conscious and unconscious psychological portraiture. This analysis is valid in that by seeing "how" a character acts, we understand "why" he acts the way he does. In the case of Anthony, after the very first scene in which we are introduced to him and which ends the first act, we are in possession of all the elements that tell us the reason why he is going to end the way he does, even before we have been shown how it happens. Anthony knows perfectly well what he is supposed to do, what he wants to do, how to do it, and why he may not do it. So does the spectator, who, as a matter of fact, has one advantage over Anthony: if Anthony knows why he may not do it, the spectator knows why he does not do it,

since he is cognizant of the denouement. Consequently, in All for Love, there is not even the kind of suspense one gets with lesser known plots. When Almanzor oscillates between his weaker and stronger self, the spectator can still wonder which one is going to win. But in spite of the fact that this oscillation is completely without interest as dramatic action in this play, it is precisely what we get in All for Love. Act I: Anthony decides to leave Cleopatra; at the end of Act II, he will stay with her.

I'm eager to return before I go,  
For all the pleasures I have known beat thick  
On my remembrance. — How I long for night!  
That both the sweets of mutual love may try,  
And once triumph o'er Caesar [ere] we die.  
(II,1, 457-461)

Anthony's last words in Act III, addressed to Octavia who has come to fetch him away are:

This is thy triumph  
Lead me where thou wilt,  
Even to thy brother's camp.  
(III,1, 369-371)

In Act IV, Anthony is not lured back by Cleopatra's charms, but the result is the same. Misled by Ventidius and Alexas, he thinks Cleopatra is false to him with his friend Dolabella; he cannot control his passion and his jealousy irritates Octavia, who leaves him.

Anthony: Why was I framed with this plain, honest heart,  
Which knows not to disguise its griefs and weakness,  
But bears its workings outward to the world?  
(IV,1, 431-433)

Evidently, he wishes Octavia had not left him. Now that he has nothing to hope for from Octavius, he can only stay and fight him.

The action in Act V is the familiar one. Beaten and believing

Cleopatra dead, Anthony falls on his sword. Cleopatra reaches him in time for both of them to acknowledge their love.

This pendulum movement which apparently Dryden mistakes for Aristotle's Peripeteia is actually the only possible one, given the characterization. When everything is pushed to its extreme implication at the start, there is nowhere to go from that extreme point but to return to where one has started from.

One other characteristic of All for Love seems to evolve directly from that very same set characterization which we have found to be identical to that of the heroic play. Since the hero can or should act only according to a given pattern, the theatrical interest, in the heroic plays, resides in an accumulation of events, of climaxes following close one upon another. In All for Love, because Dryden wanted to write a classical play, in the strictest sense, and because he was limited by his subject, the interest had to be of a different nature, that is, sentimental. The "terror" element is lost in favor of the "pity" element. This may be one of the major differences between the heroic plays and All for Love. The characterization is the same, but because passion does not overcome reason, because of the subsequent denouement, the pathetic takes the upper hand since something has to be done to get the spectator emotionally involved. For sheer tear-wringing sentimentality, All for Love can compete with the best (or possibly worst) of the sentimental plays of the eighteenth century. Here are a few passages picked at random:

Ventidius (weeping): Look, emperor, this is no common dew,  
I have not wept this forty years; but now  
My mother comes afresh into my eyes;

- I cannot help her softness.
- Anthony: By heaven, he weeps! poor, good  
old man he weeps!  
The big round drops course one another down  
The furrows of his cheeks. — Stop them....
- Ventidius: I'll do my best.
- Anthony: Sure there's contagion in the tears of friends—  
See, I have caught it, too. Believe me, 'tis not  
For my own griefs, but thine. — Nay, father!
- Ventidius: Emperor! (I,1, 262-273)
- Cleopatra: Now, what news, my charmion?  
Will he be kind? And will he not forsake me?  
Am I to live, or die? — nay, do I live?  
Or am I dead? (II,1, 35-38)
- Cleopatra: Go; leave me, soldier.  
(For you're no more a lover), leave me dying;  
Push me, all pale and panting, from your bosom.  
(II,1, 410-412)

Octavia is trying to win Anthony back. She has her children with her and pushes them toward him.

- Octavia: ....Go, I say, and pull him to me,  
And pull him to yourselves from that bad woman.  
You, Agrippina, hang upon his arms,  
And you, Antonia, clasp about his waist.  
If he will shake you off, if he will dash you  
Against the pavement, you must bear it, children,  
For you are mine, and I was born to suffer.  
(Here the Children go to him.)
- Ventidius: Was every sight so moving?—  
Emperor!
- Dolabella: Friend!
- Octavia: Husband!
- Both Children:  
Father!
- Anthony: I am vanquished. Take me,  
Octavia—take me, children—share me all.  
(Embracing them) (III,1, 454-462)

As for Cleopatra, she begs for pity throughout the play. She is presented as a poor, lovely soul made the toy of circumstances. Apparently she had been practically raped by Caesar:

He first possessed my person; you, my love.

Caesar loved me, but I loved Anthony.  
 If I endured him after 'twas because  
 I judged it due to the first name of men,  
 And, half constrained, I gave as to a tyrant  
 What he would take by force. (II,i, 453-458)

Insulted by Octavia's, "Shame of our sex, / Dost thou not blush to own  
 those black endearments / That make sin pleasing?", Cleopatra does not  
 rise above whimpering:

....The world condemns poor me,  
 For I have lost my honor, lost my fame,  
 And stained the glory of my royal house,  
 And all to bear the branded name of mistress.  
 (III,i, 461-464)

She confides to Alexas:

....Nature meant me  
 A wife--a silly, harmless, household dove,  
 Fond without art, and kind without deceit;  
 But Fortune, that has made a mistress of me,  
 Has thrust me out to the wide world, unfurnished  
 Of falsehood to be happy. (IV,i, 91-96)

This transformation of Cleopatra into a middle class bourgeois  
 housewife is not just a question of taste; otherwise, one would never  
 forgive Dryden for having attempted it. It is hard to believe that  
 simply for lack of taste, whole generations would cry at Cleopatra's  
 fate and breathe more freely when Cordelia and Edgar go on to live  
 happily ever after. It can only be because ideologically they are  
 attuned to what they are offered. And the ideology of All for Love  
 is the same as that we have found in the heroic tragedy.



The Spanish Friar<sup>17</sup>

Leonora is Queen of Aragon only because her father has usurped the crown by deposing the lawful king and murdering his children. Aragon is besieged by Abdalla the Moor and his forces. Leonora's father had promised her hand to Bertran, whose own father had helped him in deposing the lawful king. The Spanish are in a desperate situation when Torrismond, a Spanish general, with meager forces, beats off the Moors. Bertran, who is jealous of him, nevertheless congratulates him, but Torrismond claims that he has acted only out of honor and not to win praise:

....But let Honour  
Call for my Bloud; and sluice it into streams;  
Turn Fortune loose again to my pursuit;  
And let me hunt her through embattell'd Foes,  
In dusty Plains, amidst the Cannons roar,  
There will I be the first. (I,i)

Learning of Bertran's plans to marry Leonora, Torrismond cannot hide his pain and discloses his love for her. However, aware of his lowly station, he does not nourish any hope of attaining her.

Heav'n may be thought on, though too high to climbe.  
....Queens may be lov'd,  
And so may Gods; else, why are Altars rais'd?  
Why shines the Sun, but that he may be view'd?  
But, Oh! when he's too bright, if then we gaze  
'Tis but to weep; and close our eyes in darkness. (I,i)

Bertran, understandably, is far from being pleased. When Torrismond is insolent with Bertran, the Queen, hearing of the quarrel, summons Torrismond to her. There, he immediately loses all bravura:

Like a led Victim, to my Death I'll goe;  
 And, dying, bless the land that gave the blow. (II,1)

Apparently, Leonora does not know Torrismond very well since he has always been fighting away from the court. She is surprised by his gentle countenance:

But where's the Fierceness, the Disdainful Pride;  
 The Haughty Port, the Fiery Arrogance?  
 By all these Marks, this is not sure the man.

During the interview the Queen falls in love with Torrismond:

A change so swift, what heart did ever feel!  
 It rush'd upon me, like a mighty Stream,  
 And bore me in a moment far from Shore.  
 I've lov'd away my self; in one short hour  
 Already am I gon an Age of Passion. (II,1)

She manages a private meeting with him and upbraids Torrismond for presuming to love her. He protests that his love cannot hurt her since he loves in vain:

Good Heav'ns, why gave you me a Monarch's Soul,  
 And crusted it with base Plebeian Clay! (II,1)

The Queen, however, relents and offering him her pity, bids him hope. Torrismond is elated.

Leonora, completely overpowered by her love for Torrismond, tries to provoke Bertran's jealousy in order to gain grounds to reject him, but he sees the snare and is not provoked. As a last resort she explains that she put off their marriage because she is frightened by her people, who resent Bertran. He advises her to have the rightful, imprisoned king murdered. She refuses first, but on second thought decides that by doing so she would make her crown more secure for Torrismond. She does not command Bertran to do anything, but

tells him, "I leave it all to you; think what you doe, / You doe for him I love." (III,1)

After Bertran leaves, Torrismond enters and begs the Queen, who is by now his avowed lover, to have pity on the King, whom he has just visited in his prison. When Leonora tells him of Bertran's plans to murder him, Torrismond is horrified and pleads with her, showing the extent of her crime. She relents: "I knew this Truth, but I repell'd that thought." She is sending for Bertran when she receives his message: "'Tis performed."

Torrismond: Ten thousand Plagues consume him, Furies drag him,  
Fiends tear him; Blasted be the Arm that strook,  
The Tongue that order'd; — Onely She be spar'd  
That hindred not the Deed.... (III,1)

He is beside himself with pain. But Leonora begs him to forget: Bertran's act gives her an opportunity to reject him, and that same night she plans to wed Torrismond in secret. In spite of a gloomy presentiment, Torrismond accepts. (III,1)

Raymond, Torrismond's father, has come back to court and witnesses Leonora's rejection of Bertran on the grounds that he committed a base murder. Raymond's allegiance is to the old King, and he seems crushed when Leonora confides to him that she loves Torrismond. When he sees Torrismond next, he tries to rouse him against Leonora. But Torrismond will not be moved:

Torrismond: How cou'd my Hand rebell against my Heart?  
Raymond: How could your Heart rebell against your Reason?  
Torrismond: No Honour bids me fight against my self:  
The Royal Family is all extinct,  
And she who reigns bestows her Crown on me.

But Raymond urges him to avenge the death of the King, for that King was Torrismond's real father and Torrismond is his lawful heir. Torrismond, however, is appalled, since he has already married Leonora:

Th' Usurper of my Throne, my House's Ruin,  
The Murtherer of my Father, is my Wife! (IV,1)

Torrismond knows no peace:

Love, Justice, Nature, Pity, and Revenge  
Have kindled up a wild-fire in my Breast  
And I am all a Civil-war within!

He cannot make himself face Leonora:

Oh! That I could with Honour love her more,  
Or hate her less with Reason! See, she weeps;  
Thinks me unkind, or false, and knows not why  
I thus estrange my person from her Bed.

Torrismond, under Leonora's prodding, finally discloses his true identity. But when he learns that Raymond has roused the people against Leonora, he decides to protect her and declares himself the true King. (V,1) But Raymond, though beaten, insists on seeing justice done on Leonora. Torrismond's heart is breaking with pain, but he admits this should be done; Leonora, however, has already decided to leave him and to spend the rest of her life repenting her crime in a convent. She shows such deep remorse that even Raymond is moved. But everything ends happily since Bertran discloses that, having guessed Leonora's intent, he has outwitted her by not murdering the King and only spreading the rumor of his death.

Torrismond: O Bertran, O! No more my Foe but, brother:  
One act like this blots out a thousand Crimes.

Since Leonora is innocent, she and Torrismond presumably go on to live happily ever after. (V,1)

Torrismond is brave, wins battles single-handed, and is devoted to honor. Though an ardent lover, he does not presume to fulfill his love since it would be improper for a commoner to marry a Queen. (Let us remember that this was Montezuma's "frailty" in The Indian Queen.) It is evident that with very few changes, Torrismond could be just as well the hero in a heroic play.

From the point of view of ideology, the question of responsibility and guilt, as viewed in this play, presents some interest. Torrismond feels he is bound by honor to revenge his father on his wife, though he feels he cannot do it because she is his wife. He still loves her, yet he feels revulsion toward her and cannot share her bed. All this because she contributed to the murder of his father. Yet, he knew of the murder when he married her; what he did not know was that the supposedly murdered man was his father. Consequently, when he shrinks from her, it is not because she is a criminal as such, but because a whole code of honor imposes on him duties that conflict with his love for her. It is quite understandable, of course, to feel more revulsion for a crime perpetrated against your own father than against a stranger. But in Torrismond's case, the disproportion between his attitude towards Leonora, before and after he learns the real identity of the murdered man, is quite relevant, especially if we take into consideration the fact that all his life, Torrismond had loved Raymond as father, and considering the fact that the King, as stranger was known to him, and deeply respected by him. Though Leonora is guilty of murdering a king and a great man, Torrismond can

love her and feels free to respect her; the minute the murdered is revealed as his father, that is, a person Torrismond has never known as such, his whole world crumbles.

There are more suggestions than one that tend to prove that an act was judged only or rather mainly in its social rather than personal context. For instance, there is no doubt whatsoever in the mind of all those concerned that Leonora is guilty of murder. Yet, when because of external circumstances, the victim escapes his fate, she is immediately cleared of all dishonor. The fact that she had willed the murder, that the intended victim was her father-in-law, completely disappears from the picture; since the king did not die, she is not guilty.

The situation is the same with Bertran: "One act like this blots out a thousand crimes," says Torrismond as he embraces him. Actually, this act is nothing more than a further villainy on the part of Bertran. He had goaded the Queen into willing the murder, and yet, he had betrayed her and disobeyed her orders, purely out of personal, egotistical motives. But once again, we have the proof that motives and motivations were not what interested authors and spectators. An act was judged according to its consequences. The "why" something happens was ignored in favor of the "what" happens. The social emphasis in this type of interest is, of course, obvious; instead of looking inside, into himself, a character prefers looking outside, around him, at the world. An act is judged not in its relation to the individual but in its relation to the social. An external

scale of values is applied as opposed to an internal one.

Cleomenes<sup>18</sup>

Cleomenes, ex-King of Sparta, has taken refuge at the Egyptian court, ruled by the weak, luxurious Ptolomy and his mistress, Cassandra. There he awaits the help Ptolomy has promised him, in his attempt to reconquer Sparta. Cleomenes knows his own worth:

Ah! why ye Gods, must Cleomenes wait  
On this Effeminate Luxurious Court,  
For tardy helps of base Egyptian Bands?  
Why have not I, whose individual mind  
Would ask a Nation of such Sould t'inform it,  
Why have not I ten Thousand hands to fight  
It all my self? and make the Work my own? (I,i)

Cassandra, as was predictable, falls in love with Cleomenes. We immediately recognize the pattern of the villain heroine in the heroic play; she is completely dominated by her passion which, as we would expect, is of a low, physical nature:

....When we are a thirst,  
Or hungry, Will imperious Nature stay?  
Not Eat nor Drink, before 'tis bid, fall on: (II,ii)

She tries to make her love plain to Cleomenes by inviting him to ponder over a painting representing the rape of Helen by Paris. The judgment of Cleomenes is unequivocal:

A base dishonest Act; to violate  
All Hospitable Rites, to force away,  
His Benefactors Wife; Ungrateful Villain;  
And so the Gods, Th' avenging Gods have judg'd.  
(II,ii)

Throughout the play we see in Cleomenes an awareness of the proper

way to act under various exterior pressures. For instance, when thrown into prison with his wife, child and mother, apparently betrayed by his only friend, Cleomenes repudiates the suggestion of his mother, Cratisclaea, that they all commit suicide:

Not so, but that we durst not tempt the Gods,  
To break their images without their leave. (IV,i)

When they are all faint with hunger and his son begs him leave to die,

Or give me leave to die — as I desir'd;  
For without your consent, Heaven Knows I dare not,

Cleomenes still does not rebel:

I prithee stay a little; I am loath  
To say hard things of Heaven! (V,i)

With the help of his Egyptian friend, Cleanthes, Cleomenes attempts an uprising. Confronted with Cassandra, Cleanthes wants to expose her, but Cleomenes stops him:

Peace, Peace, my Friend.  
No injuries from Women can provoke  
A Man of Honour to expose their Fame. (V,i)

When one stops to think that this Cassandra was the cause of all his misfortunes, that she had starved him and his family for more than three days, that he knew she would stop at nothing (and she does not) to gain her end, his respect for decorum and proprieties, is at the very least, astonishing to a modern reader. However, it must have been something admirable to Restoration audiences, since obedience to rules and dicta (decorum) was the only reliable way of conduct.



In this play, Cleomenes is not guilty (except for having initially lost a battle); yet, he ends tragically. It would seem that the rule of poetic justice is flaunted, and actually it is. But when the reader views the tragedy as a whole, he realizes that this is done very carefully. At no moment does Cleomenes rebel against his fate. There always seems to be the implication that somewhere, somehow, justice is being done. The blurring of the concept of poetic justice is achieved also by emphasizing pity rather than terror. The spectator is asked to cry over the fate of Cleomenes and his family, but at no moment is he called upon to identify with them and undergo terror. Though Cleomenes always talks in a manly way, all the situations in which he finds himself reveal him to be a passive sufferer. He is continuously helpless, and so are his wife, mother and son. But they never rebel against their fate, so why should the spectator experience a feeling that they themselves do not undergo? When they are all starving, Cleomenes turns to his wife:

Cleomenes: What! my Cleora?  
 I stretch'd my bounds as far as I could go,  
 To shun the sight of what I cannot help;  
 A Flow'r withering on the Stalk for want  
 Of nourishment from Earth and showers from Heaven:  
 All I can give thee is but Rain of Eyes——  
(Wiping his eyes)

Cleora: Alas! I have not wherewithal to weep:  
 My eyes grow dim and stiffen'd up with drought,  
 Can hardly rowl and walk their feeble round:  
 Indeed—I am faint.....

Cleomenes: How does our helpless Infant?

Cleora: It wants the Breast, its kindly nourishment:  
 And I have none to give from these dry Cesterns,  
 Which unsupply'd themselves, can yield no more:  
 It pull'd and pull'd but now, but nothing came.  
 At last it drew so hard, that the blood follow'd:

And that Red Milk I found upon its Lips,  
Which made me swoon with fear. (V,i)

Even in Death, Cleomenes is happy doing what he should. He and his friend, Cleanthes, decide to run into each other's sword:

Cleomenes: Then enter We into each others Breasts.  
'Tis a sharp passage; yet a kind one too.  
But to prevent the blind mistake of Swords,  
Lest one drop first, and leave his Friend behind,  
Both thrust at once, and home, and at our Hearts:  
Let neither stand on Guard, but let our Bosomes  
Lie open to each other in our Death,  
As in our Life they were—  
Cleanthes: I Seal it thus. (Kiss and embrace.)  
....  
Cleomenes: ....Now are you ready, Friend?  
Cleanthes: I am.  
Cleomenes: Then this to our next happy meeting--  
(They both push together, then stagger backwards  
and fall together in each others Arms.)  
Cleanthes: Speak, have I serv'd you to your Wish, my Friend?  
Cleomenes: Yes, Friend--thou hast--I have thee in my heart--  
Say--art Thou sped?  
Cleanthes: I am, 'tis my last Breath.  
Cleomenes: And mine--Then both are Happy--- (Both Die.) (V,i)

Indeed, as one character puts it: "So, this was well perform'd and soon dispatch'd."

It is the same type of emphasis that we find in other plays where poetic justice would apparently be flaunted. In Don Sebastian,<sup>19</sup> for instance, Sebastian unwittingly marries his own sister. The lovers must part, even though and because they still love each other. But poetic justice intervenes and the play ends on this moral:

And let Sebastian's and Almeyda's Fate,  
This dreadful sentence to the World relate,  
That unrepented Crimes of Parents dead,  
Are justly punish'd on their Childrens head." (V,i)

"Unrepented" and "justly" are worth noting.

In Oedipus,<sup>20</sup> Tiresias is the exponent of the basic notion of justice which neo-classicism offered when events seemed beyond the grasp of rational interpretation, a position which is regularly associated with Alexander Pope, who made it famous:

Eurydice: Is there no God so much a friend to love,  
 Who can controule the malice of our fate?  
 Are they all deaf? Or have the Gyants Heav'n?  
 Tiresias: The Gods are just. —  
 But how can Finite measure Infinite?  
 Reason! alas, it does not know it self!  
 Yet Man, vain Man, wou'd with this short-lin'd Plummet,  
 Fathom the vast Abyesse of Heav'nly justice.  
 What ever is, is in it's causes just;  
 Since all things are by Fate. But pur-blind Man  
 Sees but a part o' th' Chain; the nearest links;  
 His eyes not carrying to that equal Beam  
 That poizes all above. (III,i)

This short survey is sufficient to show that characterization and ideology are essentially the same in Dryden's heroic plays and in his other serious plots. Also, the concept of poetic justice is equally valid in both types of plays. The essential difference, however, seems to reside in the predominance of the feeling of pity as opposed to admiration which the hero is supposed to awaken in the spectator. The hero of the heroic play is not necessarily more virtuous: Almanzor is certainly less so than Cleomenes. Both these men are made of the same mettle. The only difference between the play with the happy ending and the play with the tragic ending is that in the first, the hero acts on the events, while in the second, he is being acted upon. But, whether active or passive, the hero's stand in relation to the events is the same: he neither doubts his own self nor does he doubt the social framework in which he lives. He knows what

to do, when, how and why, even though rationally he could have some ground for doubt (Don Sebastian, Oedipus). This awareness, consciousness, certainty are what cause admiration to be replaced by pity. When admiration loses the upper hand and audiences tire of it, only pity can take its place, since "virtue" (as understood by neo-classicism) is still the hero's major qualification. We can see how, far from being a "passing whim," a phenomenon outside the main current of neo-classicism, the heroic tragedy is a necessary link in the English dramatic tradition: after the Jacobean drama with its "romantic" emphasis on Terror, the heroic tragedy fosters the feeling of admiration which, in turn, leads directly into the sentimental drama of the eighteenth century with its heavy reliance on pity. As we have seen, in Dryden's own dramatic work, we can already begin tracing the latter stage of this evolution.

## CHAPTER V

### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Alan D. McKillop, English Literature from Dryden to Burns (New York, 1948). One, of course, does not turn to manuals or anthologies for the best in literary criticism. But such works are very useful to the extent that they usually represent the most commonly adopted point of view, that they reflect a certain "stratification" of critical outlook which is sometimes very hard to shake off.

<sup>2</sup>Pendlebury, p. 125.

<sup>3</sup>G. H. Nettleton, English Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century, 1642-1780 (New York, 1923), p. 68.

<sup>4</sup>Deane, p. 70.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Marvin T. Herrick, Tragicomedy, Its Origin and Development in Italy, France and England, Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, XXXIX (Urbana, 1955), on the different meanings and concepts attached at various periods to the term tragic-comedy.

<sup>6</sup>Citations from All for Love are taken from Plays of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century, ed. Dougald MacMilland and Howard Mumford Jones (New York, 1931), pp. 176-212.

<sup>7</sup>It has seemed preferable to discuss Shakespeare's Lear rather than his Anthony. A comparison of the two Anthonies would have added a third dimension which would only have been a source of confusion. At any rate, this discussion is not about the character of Anthony per se, but about the hero in Dryden's plays as opposed to the Shakespearean hero.

<sup>8</sup>Plays of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century, p. 170.

<sup>9</sup>Essays, II, 126.

<sup>10</sup>Dramatic Works, III, 164.

<sup>11</sup>Dryden, p. 275.

<sup>12</sup>The Critical Works of Thomas Rymer, ed. Curt A. Zimansky, (New Haven, 1956), p. 132. Katherine Wheatley believes he is serious; Louis Charlanne in L'Influence Française au XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle (Paris, 1906), p. 576, is sure that the morals which Rymer offers are in jest, and he is probably right since all along this piece of criticism, Rymer is intent on ridiculing Shakespeare.

<sup>13</sup>Rymer, pp. 132, 134.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>16</sup>Plays of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century, p. 170.

<sup>17</sup>Dramatic Works, V, 127-201.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., VI, 335-397.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., VI, 29-132.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., IV, 354-426.

## CHAPTER VI

### DRYDEN, CORNEILLE AND RACINE

At one point in this study it seemed pertinent to refer to Corneille and Racine and to associate Dryden more closely with the former than with the latter. Both Racine and Corneille are the major exponents of French classical drama, and it is normal to speak of them whenever referring to it. But what often happens when English critics do so is that they seem to make no distinction between Racine and Corneille. Granted both are neo-classicists they are, nevertheless, at opposite poles from each other. To a French critic this is, of course, a truism. La Bruyère's contemporary judgment that "celui-là [Corneille] peint les hommes tels qu'ils devraient être et celui-ci [Racine] tels qu'ils sont," was carried over for generations and is familiar to all French lycéens who at one time or another had to treat the subject in a paper. For three hundred years, Corneille, as a playwright, steadily lost ground to Racine. The reason is already endemic in La Bruyère's judgment that Corneille "peint les hommes tels qu'ils devraient être." Although La Bruyère, the moralist, meant to praise Corneille, to say that Corneille paints men the way they should be nevertheless implies that he does not paint them the way they are. To the generations that followed, Corneille gradually came to represent the moralist divorced from reality, as opposed to

Racine, the psychological wizard whose implacable study of passions left no recess of the human heart unexplored. Running parallel to this trend of criticism one can discern another which stressed the essential moral character of Racine's theater (sin and guilt) as opposed to Corneille's moralizing, yet amoral if not immoral, drama: (Rodrigue is a hero because he kills a man guilty of boxing someone's ears.) The relative merit of Corneille and Racine is a subject which has not yet been given a final answer and never will, since it is directly related to the question of the respective nature of Racine's and Corneille's theater. And this, of course, is a domain which will be open to discussion as long as there are critics to discuss it. However, in the light of what has been said concerning Dryden's hero in this study, a mise au point will be attempted. The point has already been made in relation to what we have called the historical "moment," where we tried to show that Dryden and Corneille belong to the same tradition, which is not Racine's. It has seemed now interesting to go deeper into the question, examine a play by Corneille and one by Racine, and compare them to what we know of Dryden's plays. This may be of particular value since, in the twentieth century, there has been a small but active movement, a sort of renaissance, in favor of Corneille. On the whole, Racine is still the acknowledged great master of French drama, but we shall see that the problem of Corneille's renewed favor with the critics has some points of interest in common with the problems we have had to treat with Dryden. In other words, the conclusions we have reached concerning Dryden's



heroic hero may throw some light on the reasons for the renewed interest in Corneille. But before reaching this point, we must first look at the plays.

The influence of Corneille's criticism on Dryden has been pointed out repeatedly and does not directly interest us in this study: Corneille and Dryden belong to the same dramatic tradition regardless of whether one influenced the other.<sup>1</sup> However, Corneille has left a body of criticism which, though short, is directly related to his dramatic work; as we know, this is not the case for Dryden. Consequently, it is worth examining Corneille's criticism in relation to the heroic hero and thereby determine his conception of this hero.

We shall refer only to Corneille's three Discours — Du Poème Dramatique, De la Tragédie, Des Trois Unités — which he affixed to the 1660 edition of his dramatic work.<sup>2</sup>

Corneille begins by affirming that he is a disciple of Aristotle, whose precepts are to be followed in the writing of dramatic poems and especially of tragedies: "Il faut suivre les préceptes de l'art ....Il est constant qu'il y a des préceptes puisqu'il y a un art; mais il n'est pas constant quels ils sont."<sup>3</sup> The last part of the sentence is interesting. Corneille agrees on the necessity of Aristotle's rules for the theatre, but he finds them obscure and his purpose will be to try to interpret them: "Il faut...savoir quelles sont ces règles. Mais notre malheur est qu'Aristote et Horace après lui en ont écrit assez obscurément pour avoir besoin d'interprètes."<sup>4</sup>

Corneille takes up Aristotle's definition of pleasure being the

end of tragedy, and in the manner of many commentators before him, draws upon Horace to add the concept of the useful by stressing their close correlation, "puisque'il est impossible de plaire selon les règles, s'il ne s'y rencontre beaucoup d'utilité."<sup>5</sup> As we shall see, by introducing this new concept, Corneille is able to transform Aristotle's initial description of what the hero of a tragedy ought to be, and substitute for it a definition not to be found in any form in Aristotle. Discussing the problem of the "naïve peinture des vices et des vertus," Corneille states that it is not enough to paint virtue and vice as realistically as possible because the interest that the spectator takes in the virtuous makes it necessary to end a dramatic poem by rewarding them and punishing the villains: "C'est cet intérêt qu'on aime à prendre pour les vertueux qui a obligé d'en venir à cet autre manière de finir le poème dramatique par la punition des mauvaises actions et la récompense des bonnes."<sup>6</sup> We recognize here, of course, the notion of poetic justice which Corneille is careful to call a usage and not a precept since he adds that it is not "un précepte de l'art, mais un usage que nous avons embrassé, et dont chacun peut se départir à ses périls."<sup>7</sup> Consequently, it is easy for Corneille to affirm that in a tragedy, "nous avons le choix de faire un changement de bonheur en malheur ou de malheur en bonheur" which is, of course, in contradiction to Aristotle's stand that a tragedy should only develop from a happy state to an unhappy one. We can see here how Corneille, having wrought arguments for a happy ending, is going to arrive at a definition of the hero which will also be in contradiction

with that of Aristotle. Corneille agrees with Aristotle on the point that a hero should be "ni tout à fait bon, ni tout à fait méchant" but insists that the precept is valid only in theory and not in practice. He examines the examples of Oedipus and Thyestes given by Aristotle only to reject them: "J'avoue donc avec franchise que je n'entends pas l'application de cet exemple."<sup>8</sup> Corneille completely misinterprets Aristotle and cannot understand how pity and fear could result from the application of Aristotle's precept: "J'avoueraï plus. Si la purgation des passions se fait dans la tragédie, je tiens qu'elle se doit faire de la manière dont je l'explique; mais je doute si elle s'y fait jamais, et dans celles-là même qui ont les conditions que demande Aristote."<sup>9</sup>

Corneille interprets Aristotle's "catharsis" didactically:

La pitié d'un malheur où nous voyons tomber nos semblables nous porte à la crainte d'un pareil pour nous; cette crainte, au désir de l'éviter; et ce désir, à purger, modérer, rectifier, et même déraciner en nous la passion qui plonge à nos yeux dans ce malheur les personnes que nous plaignons, par cette raison commune, mais naturelle et indubitable, que pour éviter l'effet, il faut retrancher la cause."<sup>10</sup>

It is on these grounds that he rejects the example of Oedipus, for instance. Oedipus did not know his father and his mother; how could he be guilty of parricide and incest? And in what manner is the audience to profit from Oedipus's example? After all, not many are ready to kill their own father and commit incest with their mother. Consequently, Corneille believes that in the case of the purgation of pity and fear, it is best arrived at in plays written as he writes

them, and he cites his own Le Cid as an example. Rodrigue and Chimène are subject to passion, and it is this passion that is the cause of their unhappiness which creates pity in the spectator:

Rodrigue et Chimène y ont cette probité sujette aux passions, et ces passions font leur malheur, puisqu'ils ne sont malheureux qu'autant qu'ils sont passionnés l'un pour l'autre. Ils tombent dans l'infélicité par cette foiblesse humaine dont nous sommes capables comme eux; leur malheur fait pitié, cela est constant, et il en a coûté assez de larmes aux spectateurs pour ne le point contester. Cette pitié nous doit donner une crainte de tomber dans un pareil malheur, et purger en nous ce trop d'amour qui cause leur infortune et nous les fait plaindre.<sup>11</sup>

Corneille is discerning enough to realize that the feeling of fear (crainte) is indeed not very powerful in this case. He offers two explanations: one is that this fear is not spontaneous but deduced, what he calls "réflechie"; another is that maybe Aristotle himself did not believe in it too strongly but included it only in answer to Plato who had excluded poets from his ideal republic because they created too many passions in their audiences. If Aristotle can show that these passions are purged instead of being created, then he can claim for poets the usefulness which Plato denies them: "Comme il [Aristotle] écrivoit pour le [Plato] contredire, et montrer qu'il n'est pas à propos de les bannir des Etats bien policés, il a voulu trouver cette utilité dans ces agitations de l'âme, pour les rendre recommandables par la raison même, sur qui l'autre se fonde pour les bannir."<sup>12</sup> However, since it would be unthinkable for Corneille to oppose Aristotle, he finds a compromise by supplementing his meaning and decides that most certainly Aristotle had not meant pity and

fear to be necessarily associated; that is, the one can happen without the other, and this is especially true for fear, since ultimately pity can always produce a salutary "crainte réfléchie." In his own Le Cid, the spectator experiences fear in the case of the Count (justly punished for his pride, is Corneille's implication) and feels mainly pity for Rodrigue and Chimène. Corneille draws the conclusion that entirely good or bad characters should not be excluded from the theatre since the former create pity and the latter fear in the spectator: "J'estime qu'il ne faut point faire de difficulté d'exposer sur la scène des hommes très vertueux ou très méchants dans le malheur."<sup>13</sup> After discussing the plot-subjects Aristotle offers, Corneille finds them adequate to create pity "qui fait de si beaux effets sur nos théâtres," but offers at least one more plot which he considers better, "plus sublime"; it is the one where the good are saved through the misfortune of the bad: "Sauver les bons par la perte des méchants."<sup>14</sup> Corneille does not presume to be a better judge than Aristotle; if Aristotle had not suggested this plot, it is because he saw no examples of it in the theatre of his time: "et s'il n'en a point parlé, c'est qu'il n'en voyait point d'exemples sur les théâtres de son temps, où ce n'était pas la mode de sauver les bons par la perte des méchants."<sup>15</sup>

If it has seemed advisable to dwell at some length on Corneille's conception of pity, fear and poetic justice, it is because they throw some light on the psychological portraiture of the heroic hero. Corneille, by adding the notion of the useful to that of esthetic

pleasure, is able to separate the notion of pity and fear and link the first with the good characters and the second with the villains. This is very important because, by ascribing pity to heroes, he gives it a pre-eminent position which points directly to the sentimental drama of the eighteenth century. Corneille's emphasis on pity is relevant since he admires his own Le Cid and does not hesitate to call it a great play because it has moved its spectators to tears: "leur malheur [Rodrigue's and Chimène's] fait pitié; cela est constant, et il en a coûté assez de larmes aux spectateurs pour ne le point contester."<sup>16</sup> Let us be reminded that Le Cid was acted first in 1636.

Corneille's discussion of the various components of the drama is very important in relation to Dryden's own critical writings. But, on the subject of the hero, the essential has been said; Corneille's point of view contributes much to a better understanding of the heroic drama as we have found it to be. The ultimate rule, that of the hero being a paragon of virtue, is not stated by Corneille in so many words, but it is to be deduced from his discussion of pity, fear and poetic justice, and from occasional remarks related to other points being discussed; as for example,

...et pour exténuer ou retrancher cette horreur dangeureuse d'une action historique, je voudrais la voir arriver sans la participation du premier acteur, pour qui nous devons toujours ménager la faveur de l'auditoire....C'est un soin que nous devons prendre de préserver nos héros du crime tant qu'il se peut, et les exempter même de tremper leurs mains dans le sang si ce n'est en un juste combat....Notre maxime de faire aimer nos principaux acteurs n'était pas de l'usage des anciens.<sup>17</sup>

In this short review of Corneille's thought, it is plain that however much he endeavored to find a via media with Aristotle, he not only failed, but arrived at a concept of the hero directly opposed to that of Aristotle. On the other hand, the identity between Corneille's and Dryden's thought has also made itself clear.

An examination of one of Corneille's plays will further illustrate the similarity of these two men's dramatic work. Horace will be studied rather than Le Cid because it is probably a heroic tragedy more typical, if not as well known.

### Horace<sup>18</sup>

Rome and Albe are at war. Horace, whose wife Sabine is from Albe, and his two brothers are chosen to fight against three Albian opponents. Horace is elated by the choice:

Mais quoique ce combat me promette un cercueil,  
La gloire de ce choix m'enfle d'un juste orgueil;  
Mon esprit en conçoit une mâle assurance:  
J'ose espérer beaucoup de mon peu de vaillance;  
Et du sort envieux quels que soient les projets,  
Je ne me compte point pour un de vos sujets.  
Rome a trop cru de moi; mais mon âme ravie  
Remplira son attente, ou quittera la vie.  
Qui veut mourir, ou vaincre, est vaincu rarement:  
Ce noble désespoir périt malaisément. (II,1, 377-386)

Curiace, his wife's brother and his friend, is not too happy at the choice since, on the one hand he wants Albe to win and, on the other, he is afraid for Horace: "Ce que veut mon pays mon amitié le craint....De tous les deux côtés j'ai des pleurs à répandre." Curiace, furthermore, is engaged to Horace's sister, Camille. When he learns

that he and his two brothers are Albe's choice to fight the Horaces, he accepts the responsibility but revolts at his fate:

Que désormais le ciel, les enfers et la terre  
Unissent leurs fureurs à nous faire la guerre;  
Que les hommes, les Dieux, les démons et le sort  
Préparent contre nous un général effort!  
Je mets à faire pis, en l'état où nous sommes,  
Le sort, et les démons, et les Dieux, et les hommes.  
Ce qu'ils ont de cruel, et d'horrible et d'affreux,  
L'est bien moins que l'honneur qu'on nous fait à tous  
deux.

Horace, however, seems to relish his fate even more than before: to fight for one's country is within the scope of any ordinary virtue, but to sacrifice what one loves for the public weal, to sever all bonds for the love of one's country is only given to heroes, those with "âmes peu communes."

Combattre un ennemi pour le salut de tous,  
D'une simple vertu c'est l'effet ordinaire:  
Mille déjà l'ont fait, mille pourroient le faire;  
Mourir pour le pays est un si digne sort,  
Qu'on briguerait en foule une si belle mort;  
Mais vouloir au public immoler ce qu'on aime,  
S'attacher au combat contre un autre soi-même,  
Attaquer un parti qui prend pour défenseur  
Le frère d'une femme et l'amant d'une soeur,  
Et rompant tous ces noeuds, s'armer pour la patrie  
Contre un sang qu'on voudroit racheter de sa vie,  
Une telle vertu n'appartenoit qu'à nous;  
L'éclat de son grand nom lui fait peu de jaloux,  
Et peu d'hommes au coeur l'ont assez imprimée  
Pour oser aspirer à tant de renommée. (II,iii, 437-452)

Curiake acknowledges the validity of Horace's arguments, but, though he is just as ready as Horace to serve his country, he would have preferred another means to do so. He finds Horace's resolute attitude rather inhuman:

Mais votre fermeté tient un peu du barbare  
....



Encor qu'à mon devoir je coure sans terreur,  
 Mon coeur s'en effarouche, et j'en frémis d'horreur;  
 J'ai pitié de moi-même et jette un oeil d'envie  
 Sur ceux dont notre guerre a consumé la vie,  
 Sans souhait toutefois de pouvoir reculer.  
 Ce triste et fier honneur m'émeut sans m'ébranler:  
 J'aime ce qu'il me donne, et je plains ce qu'il m'ôte;  
 Et si Rome demande une vertu plus haute,  
 Je rends grâces aux Dieux de n'être pas Romain,  
 Pour conserver encor quelque chose d'humain.  
 (II,iii, 456 and 473-482)

But Horace is not moved:

Contre qui que ce soit que mon pays m'emploie,  
 J'accepte aveuglément cette gloire avec joie.  
 .... (II,iii, 491-492)  
 Rome a choisi mon bras, je n'examine rien:  
 Avec une allégresse aussi pleine et sincère  
 Que j'épousai la soeur, je combattrai le frère;  
 Et pour trancher enfin ces discours superflus,  
 Albe vous a nommé, je ne vous connois plus.  
 (II,iii, 498-502)

What Horace says here is worth examining: his country calls, and he obeys blindly, "aveuglément." Far from being crushed, he feels "allégresse," and by killing Curiace, he will experience the same kind of fulfillment he did when he married Sabine. The quality of the comparison here is indicative of Horace's state of mind. Horace will abandon himself to the act of killing in the same way he abandons himself to the act of love and anticipates the same type of exhilaration. The physical aspect of this comparison may not have been present in Corneille's conscious mind, but it is there, nevertheless. Horace subjects his feelings, his thoughts, his beliefs to the act he is to perform. He can only do so if he abandons himself, shuts himself away from his own consciousness, through a commitment that leads him directly to a point of no return. This shutting away is explicitly

stated when he calls all this arguing "discours superflus." Words, that is, ideas, do not count; acts do. The submission or loss of the self is so great that in a matter of seconds Horace can assume a different identity, if identity can be defined partly as what a human being has experienced, loved, thought, up to the present time. But without one moment of hesitation, Horace is able to disown his former self in disowning Curiace: "Albe vous a nommé, je ne vous connois plus." Horace's stand is further emphasized by the delineation of Curiace's character, Curiace, who answers the above statement with: "Je vous connois encore, et c'est ce qui me tue." (II,iii, 503)

All through the play, Horace maintains the same iron determination, the same blind commitment he displays in these first scenes. When his wife begs Horace and Curiace to kill her in order to sever every link between them, so that they can fight each other with no remorse, Horace is not really shaken but puzzled; he does not face up to his problem and assume the responsibility of the consequences of his act. That is, he can only view Sabine's words and acts in relation to himself and his own determination, and not in relation to her own position as wife and sister:

Que t'ai-je fait, Sabine, et quelle est mon offense  
 Qui t'oblige à chercher une telle vengeance?  
 Que t'a fait mon honneur, et par quel droit viens-tu  
 Avec toute ta force attaquer ma vertu? (II,vi, 667-670)

Indeed, what right does Sabine have to interfere? Only the right she derives from her love for him, for her brother, for her native country and her adopted one. But these motives are not even to be considered

by Horace. If he is to be blind to his own fate, he has to be completely blind to his wife's.

After his brothers are killed by the Curiaces, Horace runs away from the battlefield but only in order to allow the wounded Curiaces to pursue him, thus enabling him to fight them one after the other and win the day.

Returning home, the first person he meets is his sister Camille. In this scene, we have most probably Corneille's greatest stroke of genius in characterization. Horace addresses his sister before she has said anything and his very first words are to brag of his victory. Whereas anyone else would have understood her pain, he chooses to ignore it and boasts of the very act that brings her misery.

Ma soeur, voici le bras qui venge nos deux frères,  
Le bras qui rompt le cours de nos destins contraires,  
Qui nous rend maîtres d'Albe; enfin voici le bras  
Qui seul fait aujourd'hui le sort de deux Etats;  
Vois ces marques d'honneur, ces témoins de ma gloire,  
Et rends ce que tu dois à l'heur de ma victoire.

(IV, v, 1251-1256)

All that Camille answers is: "Recevez donc mes pleurs, c'est ce que je lui dois." But Horace will not be content with an evasive answer. He chooses to misinterpret the object of Camille's sorrow and assumes it is all for her brothers' death: "Quand la perte est vengée, on n'a plus rien perdu." Still Camille follows his lead and, with deep irony, agrees to stop crying for her brothers since they are avenged, but she adds:

Camille: Mais qui me vengera de celle d'un amant,  
Pour me faire oublier sa perte en un moment?

Horace: Que dis-tu, malheureuse?

Camille: O mon cher Curiace!

(IV, v, 1265-1267)

Camille's relatively subdued attitude here should be stressed, especially in view of the fact that in the preceding scene, in a long and agonizing soliloquy, she had entirely rejected her family's stand as barbarous. The scene with Horace is the famous one of Camille's "imprécations," an instance which blurs the fact of her initial meekness. All she says is "mon cher Curiace," and Horace literally leaps at her with such words as "indigne...insupportable audace...criminelle" and orders her to dominate her passion:

O d'une indigne soeur insupportable audace!  
 D'un ennemi public dont je reviens vainqueur  
 Le nom est dans ta bouche et l'amour dans ton coeur!  
 Ton ardeur criminelle à la vengeance aspire!  
 Ta bouche la demande, et ton coeur la respire!  
 Suis moins ta passion, règle mieux tes desirs,  
 Ne me fais plus rougir d'entendre tes soupirs;  
 Tes flammes désormais doivent être étouffées;  
 Bannis-les de ton âme, et songe à mes trophées:  
 Qu'ils soient dorénavant ton unique entretien.

(IV,v, 1268-1277)

It is only after this that Camille bursts out with her "imprécations" which begin with: "Donne-moi donc, barbare, un coeur comme le tien" and end with: "Voir le dernier Romain à son dernier soupir, / Moi seule en être cause, et mourir de plaisir!" Camille is not the one who provokes Horace's wrath. It is rather he who provokes her into the passionate assertion of her fidelity to Curiace's memory. This is very important, for Horace accuses Camille of treason before she has proclaimed herself against Rome, and solely on the grounds of her sorrow as lover. He wants her not only true to Rome but also happy about the outcome. One feels that when Horace kills Camille, he is not trying to suppress so much the traitor as the sufferer,

that is, the one who stands for the relative as against the absolute value of things. Horace's world has no room for the likes of Camille; she must be suppressed and Horace kills her. Ironically, he has just told her to dominate her passions: "Suis moins ta passion, règle mieux tes désirs." As to Horace himself, he dominates his passions indeed, when the passions are love for his wife, friendship, pity for a sister's misfortunes. But anger at a sister's sorrow is a passion he cannot dominate and which carries him to the point of committing murder. It would be wrong to assume that pity and understanding are foreign to Corneille's heroic world; all through the play Sabine and Curiace exemplify such feelings without any shade of dishonor being cast upon them. Indeed, Curiace is not one iota less honorable than Horace at any moment in the play. Furthermore, in Corneille's own time, Camille's murder by Horace was considered a blemish in the play. D'Aubignac, for instance, in his Pratique du Théâtre, says:

La mort de Camille par la main d'Horace, son frère, n'a pas été approuvée au théâtre, bien que ce soit une aventure véritable, et j'avois été d'avis, pour sauver en quelque sorte l'histoire, et tout ensemble la bienséance de la scène, que cette fille désespérée, voyant son frère l'épée à la main, se fut précipitée dessus: ainsi elle fut morte de la main d'Horace, et lui eut été digne de compassion comme un malheureux innocent; l'histoire et le théâtre auroient été d'accord.<sup>19</sup>

In the Examen affixed to his own play Corneille acknowledges this blemish most candidly and even adds arguments against it: "Tous veulent que la mort de Camille en gâte la fin, et j'en demeure d'accord; mais je ne sais si tous en savent la raison."<sup>20</sup> He points out

that this action has not been prepared for in the plot, is not really linked to the main action:

Elle surprend tout d'un coup; et toute la préparation que j'y ai donnée par la peinture de la vertu farouche d'Horace, et par la défense qu'il fait à sa soeur de regretter qui que ce soit, de lui ou de son amant, qui meure au combat, n'est point suffisante pour faire attendre un emportement si extraordinaire, et servir de commencement à cette action.<sup>21</sup>

It is exciting to see an author carried away, so to speak, by his own characterization; Corneille seems to be looking at Horace and feeling as surprised as any spectator at the violence of Horace's reaction. Corneille, furthermore, stresses the gratuity of Horace's act:

Horace revient triomphant, sans aucun besoin de tuer sa soeur, ni même de parler à elle; et l'action seroit suffisamment terminée à sa victoire. Cette chute d'un péril en l'autre, sans nécessité, fait ici un effet d'autant plus mauvais, que d'un péril public, où il y va de tout l'Etat, il tombe en un péril particulier, où il n'y va que de sa vie, et pour dire encore plus, d'un péril illustre, où il ne peut succomber que glorieusement, en un péril infâme, dont il ne peut sortir sans tâche.<sup>22</sup>

But Corneille does not even attempt to explain away these faults of the play. The closest he comes to a refutation is that Camille's murder by Horace is a historical fact. When one considers the liberties which Corneille habitually took with history, one can indeed doubt the validity of this excuse.

From our point of view, however, this murder is the stroke of genius which, in Horace, brings the characterization of the heroic hero to such a point of perfection that he transcends himself and attains his contrary — that is, becomes an anti-hero: the hero can

face anything except his own self. For Horace to understand Camille, that is, to agree that the reasons for her sorrow could be valid, would be to acknowledge the existence of values he has once and for all rejected. It would mean entering a world of feelings and passions which he does not want to enter. To accept Camille's sorrow would give it a reality which would challenge the validity of his own act. It would mean a break in the solidity of the wall with which he has surrounded himself. An attempt to understand Camille might lead him to want to understand himself and this would be the negation of Horace's very existence. Once and for all, Horace has adopted a scale of values which for him has taken the place of motives. His complete subjection to that scale of values enables him to think by acts, so to speak: the act is entitled to a value judgment but not the motive. However, this can only be the case if one assumes that this scale of values is absolute and unchallenged. Camille questions it, so Horace has to kill Camille. By killing her, he kills that part of himself which he wants subjected; he kills that other self which could have existed. He seems to be speaking as much of himself as of Camille when he says: "Et ce souhait impie, encore qu'impuissant, / Est un monstre qu'il faut étouffer en naissant." (IV,vi, 1333-1334)

It is this murder of Camille which, far from taking all human feeling away from Horace, actually restores him to his place among other human beings. By this murder he becomes nothing more than a man afraid to look into himself. This negation of self, this complete surrender to a code of conduct evolved for him by others is what makes

of Horace a character with an extremely modern psychology, a type of character which has rarely been found so profusely up until this century, for rarely has indoctrination attained such perfection in the past.

\*   \*   \*

Turning to Racine, one enters a world altogether different. For purposes of study, one is always tempted to choose Phèdre since it is probably not only Racine's most typical play, but also the one in which he attains the summit of his art as dramatist. However, in relation to the heroic play, it may be best to turn to Bérénice, for in many aspects it is a heroic play; and yet it is very different from any of Corneille's or Dryden's dramas. Actually it is precisely when Bérénice comes closest to being a heroic play that the differences between the two schools of drama become more evident.

To delineate a Racinean plot is no easy task, for one is faced with two alternatives: to give the plot or fable in one or two sentences, or to enter minutely into a close analysis of the action. With a play by Corneille or Dryden the problem is one of simplification: the events which constitute the action are so numerous that one is at a loss to decide which to take up and which to leave. But with Racine the plot is so simple that no such problem exists, and Bérénice is probably the play with the simplest plot of all. Racine himself, translating from Suétone, gives it in one sentence: "Titus, qui aimoit passionément Bérénice, et qui même, à ce qu'on croyoit, lui avoit promis de l'épouser, la renvoya de Rome, malgré lui et



malgré elle, dès les premiers jours de son empire."<sup>23</sup> We recognize here the heroic theme of love versus duty which so many misguided critics thought they found in Dryden's heroic plays. Titus, though passionately in love with Bérénice, obeys the call of duty and forsakes her. According to Racine it is the very simplicity of the plot that appealed to him: "Mais ce qui m'en plut davantage, c'est que je le trouvais extrêmement simple. Il y avoit longtemps que je voulois essayer si je pourrois faire une tragédie avec cette simplicité d'action qui a été si fort du goût des anciens."<sup>24</sup>

In view of this simplicity of plot, to study the play will be more a matter of analyzing it than of summarizing it; that is, a matter of examining how things happen rather than what happens.

### Bérénice<sup>25</sup>

Antiochus, an Oriental king, friend of both Titus and Bérénice, in view of her rumored nuptials with Titus, informs her of both his love for her and his imminent departure. Bérénice, in this first scene of hers, is full of both happiness and self-assurance; she shows it in her answer to Antiochus:

Seigneur, je n'ai pas cru que dans une journée  
 Qui doit avec César unir ma destinée,  
 Il fut quelque mortel qui put impunément  
 Se venir à mes yeux déclarer mon amant.  
 Mais de mon amitié mon silence est un gage:  
 J'oublie en sa faveur un discours qui m'outrage.  
 Je n'en ai point troublé le cours injurieux.  
 Je fais plus: à regret je reçois vos adieux.  
 Le ciel sait qu'au milieu des honneurs qu'il m'envoie,

Je n'attendois que vous pour témoin de ma joie.  
 Avec tout l'univers j'honorois vos vertus;  
 Titus vous chérissoit, vous admiriez Titus.  
 Cent fois je me suis fait une douceur extrême  
 D'entretenir Titus dans un autre lui-même.

(I,iv, 259-272)

Bérénice is sure that finally Titus is going to marry her: "dans une journée / Qui doit avec César unir ma destinée"; her use of the name César instead of Titus is indicative of her mood. Though pained at the loss of a friend, she is apparently really thinking of herself instead of Antiochus; otherwise her unconscious cruelty, in giving him the reasons why she would have wanted him to stay, would be incomprehensible: "Cent fois je me suis fait une douceur extrême / D'entretenir Titus dans un autre lui-même." Only a woman engrossed in her own happy state would be so impervious to another's suffering. Antiochus is no dupe: "Et c'est ce que je fais. J'évite, mais trop tard, / Ces cruels entretiens où je n'ai point de part." (I,iv, 273-274) When he leaves Bérénice, her confidant is full of pity for him and asks Bérénice, "Ne le plaignez-vous pas?" Bérénice should have answered, "Yes, I pity him." Instead, she again refuses to consider Antiochus's condition in relation to her own suffering, and displays the same egoistical concern she had shown him in the previous scene. "Cette promptre retraite / Me laisse, je l'avoue, une douleur secrète." When Phénice suggests that Bérénice should have tried to keep Antiochus as an alternate choice in case Titus proves fickle, Bérénice spurns the suggestion: "Le temps n'est plus, Phénice, où je pouvois trembler. / Titus m'aime; il peut tout." In other words, since Titus loves her, Bérénice feels all-powerful. She has the careless

self-assurance usually associated with those whom life has spared as yet. She is thrilled by all the pomp and splendour in which she is going to participate, to the point of exhilaration:

De cette nuit, Phénice, as-tu vu la splendeur?  
 Tes yeux ne sont-ils pas tous pleins de sa grandeur?  
 Ces flambeaux, ce bûcher, cette nuit enflammée,  
 Ces aigles, ces faisceaux, ce peuple, cette armée,  
 Cette foule de rois, ces consuls, ce sénat,  
 Qui tous de mon amant empruntoient leur éclat;  
 Cette pourpre, cet or, qui rehaussoit sa gloire,  
 Et ces lauriers encor témoins de sa victoire.  
 (I,v, 301-308)

The first act ends on a triumphal note from Bérénice:

Que tardons-nous? Allons, pour son empire heureux,  
 Au ciel, qui le protège, offrir aussi nos vœux.  
 Aussitôt, sans l'attendre et sans être attendue,  
 Je reviens le chercher, et dans cette entrevue  
 Dire tout ce qu'aux cœurs l'un de l'autre contents  
 Inspirent des transports retenus si longtemps.  
 (I,v, 321-326)

Titus's opening words in the second act are to ask for Antiochus.

The audience, until then, knows Titus only through descriptions by both Antiochus and Bérénice. The overall portrait derived from these descriptions is the one usually reserved for heroes in heroic plays. Even Antiochus, though his rival, has to acknowledge his virtue: "La valeur de Titus surpassoit ma fureur. / Il faut qu'à sa vertu mon estime réponde." (I,iv, 218-219)

We saw Bérénice leave the stage in an exalted mood. When Titus enters, he is far from answering the triumphal description Bérénice has just given of him. His attitude is rather business-like and sad. When informed of Bérénice's gratitude for him, he answers with: "Trop aimable princesse! Hélas!" Titus wants Paulin, his adviser,



Antiochus' whereabouts. We know now that it is to escort Bérénice back to her kingdom.

J'attends Antiochus pour lui recommander  
Ce dépôt précieux que je ne puis garder.  
Jusque dans l'Orient je veux qu'il la ramène.  
Demain Rome avec lui verra partir la Reine.  
Elle en sera bientôt instruite par ma voix,  
Et je vais lui parler pour la dernière fois.  
(II,ii, 485-490)

The situation offered the audience is then a tragic one: at the time when Bérénice thinks her fortunes are at their highest, they have never been in fact at a lower ebb.

Paulin can only commend Titus: "Et qu'un héros vainqueur de tant de nations / Sauroit bien, tôt ou tard, vaincre ses passions."  
(II,ii, 497-498)

But how far Titus is from feeling the exhilaration and self-assurance of the usual heroic hero! His eyes are open to his own cruelty: "Ah! que sous de beaux noms cette gloire est cruelle." His love for Bérénice had made a better man of him: "Je lui dois tout, Paulin." But how does he reward her? "Récompense cruelle." Horace's actions and attitude, as we have seen, were termed cruel and barbarous; the one important difference is that these terms were used by others to qualify Horace, whereas Titus himself applies these terms to his own behavior. Far from making Bérénice responsible for the difficult choice he has to make and accusing her of being the means of drawing him away from his duty, as Horace accuses Sabine, Titus is all sympathy, and identifies himself completely with Bérénice's situation:

Récompense cruelle!  
 Tout ce que je lui dois va retomber sur elle.  
 Pour prix de tant de gloire et de tant de vertus,  
 Je lui dirai: 'Partez, et ne me voyez plus.'  
 (II,ii, 519-522)

This capacity for sympathy gives the measure of Titus's love:

Je connois Bérénice, et ne sais que trop bien  
 Que son coeur n'a jamais demandé que le mien.  
 Je l'aimai, je lui plus. Depuis cette journée  
 (Dois-je dire funeste, hélas! ou fortunée?)  
 Sans avoir en aimant d'objet que son amour,  
 Etrangère dans Rome, inconnue à la cour,  
 Elle passe ses jours, Paulin, sans rien prétendre  
 Que quelque heure à me voir, et le reste à m'attendre.  
 Encor si quelquefois un peu moins assidu  
 Je passe le moment ou je suis attendu,  
 Je la revois bientôt de pleurs toute trempée.  
 Ma main à les sécher est longtemps occupée.  
 Enfin tout ce qu'Amour a de noeuds plus puissants,  
 Doux reproches, transports sans cesse renaissants,  
 Soins de plaire sans art, crainte toujours nouvelle,  
 Beauté, gloire, vertu, je trouve tout en elle.  
 Depuis cinq ans entiers chaque jour je la vois,  
 Et crois toujours la voir pour la première fois.  
 (II,ii, 529-546)

The wound he is ready to inflict upon Bérénice probably hurts him more than it will hurt her. When finally the two meet, he finds himself unable to inform her of his decision and leaves her hastily, half choking on the words, "Rome....l'Empire...."

Bérénice in this last scene of the second act, is left much less sure of her grounds than at the end of the first act:

Quoi? me quitter sitôt, et ne me dire rien?  
 Chère Phénice, hélas! quel funeste entretien!  
 Qu'ai-je fait? Que veut-il? Et que dit ce silence?  
 (II,v, 625-627)

She considers the possibility of Titus taking the side of Rome, but only to reject it:

Il craint peut-être, il craint d'épouser une reine.

Hélas! s'il étoit vrai....Mais non, il a cent fois  
Rassuré mon amour contre leurs dures lois;  
(II,v, 640-642)

She prefers to take up the supposition that, informed of Antiochus's love for her, Titus is jealous: "L'amour d'Antiochus l'a peut-être offensé." In this case, she has nothing to fear:

Allons, Phénice, un mot pourra le satisfaire.  
Rassurons-nous, mon coeur, je puis encor lui plaire:  
Je me comptois trop tôt au rang des malheureux.  
Si Titus est jaloux, Titus est amoureux.  
(II,v, 663-666)

At this point, Bérénice is not as triumphant, but she is still deluded as to her fortunes.

Titus informs Antiochus of his resolution:

Telle est ma destinée.  
Pour elle et pour Titus il n'est plus d'hyménée.  
D'un espoir si charmant je me flattois en vain:  
Prince, il faut avec vous qu'elle parte demain.  
(III,i, 715-718)

Far from taking pride in it, he asks Antiochus to pity him:

Plaignez ma grandeur importune.  
Maître de l'univers, je règle sa fortune;  
Je puis faire les rois, je puis les déposer:  
Cependant de mon coeur je ne puis disposer.  
(III,i, 719-722)

Since Antiochus is such a good friend, he asks him to break the news to Bérénice and begs of him to take good care of her:

Adieu: ne quittez point ma princesse, ma reine,  
Tout ce qui de mon coeur fut l'unique désir,  
Tout ce que j'aimerai jusqu'au dernier soupir.  
(III,i, 768-770)

Antiochus is at a loss: should he rejoice or not? He knows Bérénice too well to hope for much. Yet, how can his situation become

worse? Any change is for the better. But face to face with Bérénice, he also does not feel strong enough to tell her the news. It is only her repeated pleading that finally forces him to do it:

Antiochus: Titus m'a commandé....

Bérénice: Quoi?

Antiochus: De vous déclarer

Qu'à jamais l'un de l'autre il faut vous séparer.

Bérénice: Nous séparer? Qui? Moi? Titus de Bérénice!

(III,iii, 893-895)

Bérénice cannot believe the news. Titus loves her too much. His honor forbids him to leave her: "Il ne me quitte point, il y va de sa gloire....Titus m'aime. Titus ne veut point que je meure." All that Antiochus tells her is a scheme designed by him to try to part her from Titus. Her cruelty towards Antiochus has never reached a higher point, since at the time in which she accuses him of treason, she feels her argument is only a way to deceive herself: "Hélas! pour me tromper je fais ce que je puis." (III,iii, 918)

Antiochus is crushed by the irony of his situation:

Je me verrai puni parce qu'il est coupable?

Avec quelle injustice et quelle indignité

Elle doute à mes yeux de ma sincérité!

Titus l'aime, dit-elle, et moi je l'ai trahie.

L'ingrate! m'accuser de cette perfidie!

Et dans quel temps encor? Dans le moment fatal

Que j'étale à ses yeux les pleurs de mon rival;

Que, pour la consoler, je le faisais paraître

Amoureux et constant, plus qu'il ne l'est peut-être.

(III,iv, 932-940)

Antiochus has made up his mind never to see Bérénice any more. Yet, the third act ends with him sending his confidant after Bérénice to make sure she does not attempt anything violent that would endanger her own life: "Va voir si la douleur ne l'a point saisie. / Cours;



et partons du moins assurés de sa vie." (III,iv, 951-956)

The play has reached its climax. Bérénice is in possession of the facts. The problem is stated: Titus is determined she should go and she knows it. The question is: what will she do? Or rather, what will she feel? When and how is she going to reach the stage of recognition?

At her own request, Titus is about to face Bérénice; understandably, he is frightened. Now that she knows, she will try to influence him. He is not sure of the outcome of the battle between both their wills, especially in view of the fact that he is quite cognizant of what he owes her, and of the cruel and barbarous quality of his duty. In a passionate soliloquy he goes over the problem once more:

Hé bien! Titus, que viens-tu faire?  
Bérénice t'attend. Où viens-tu, téméraire?  
Tes adieux sont-ils prêts? T'es-tu bien consulté?  
Ton coeur te promet-il assez de cruauté?  
Car enfin au combat qui pour toi se prépare  
C'est peu d'être constant, il faut être barbare.  
Soutiendrai-je ces yeux dont la douce langueur  
Sait si bien découvrir les chemins de mon coeur?  
Quand je verrai ces yeux armés de tous les charmes,  
Attaches sur les miens, m'accabler de leurs larmes,  
Me souviendrai-je alors de mon triste devoir?  
(IV,iv, 987-997)

Self-righteousness is certainly not one of Titus's failings. How can it be? It is possible for Corneille's heroes to be self-righteous; all that is asked of them is that they know what they are supposed to do and do it. They are not responsible for the laws they follow. Titus's case is different. He is in a position to make his own laws. This is clearly stated all through the play. Titus is not blinded by his sense of duty; he can see its drawbacks and

accepts the responsibility for the consequences of following it. He does what he does, not out of blind commitment, but through a search for motives which leaves him with his eyes open as to the nature of his actions, and allows him to qualify them with such words as "cruauté...barbare...triste devoir." He is lucid where Corneille's heroes are blind. Given the same act, the one judges it, the other obeys the order to do it.

When Titus finally meets Bérénice and she strikes out at him with: "Hé bien, il est donc vrai que Titus m'abandonne? / Il faut nous séparer et c'est lui qui l'ordonne," he tries to help her transcend her own situation. Bérénice has reached her lowest point; cast away, wild with anguish, she is ready to fight with whatever weapons she can avail herself of while Titus endeavors to appeal to her better nature:

Rappelez bien plutôt ce coeur, qui tant de fois  
M'a fait de mon devoir reconnoître la voix.  
Il en est temps. Forcez votre amour à se taire;  
Et d'un oeil que la gloire et la raison éclaire  
Contemplez mon devoir dans toute sa rigueur.  
Vous-même contre vous fortifiez mon coeur.

(IV,v, 1049-1054)

He is actually asking Bérénice to become what the heroine in Dryden's heroic plays generally is. The most important factor, however, is that here, it is he, the hero, who is showing the heroine the way to duty, while in Dryden's plays it is she who performs this role.

Bérénice, however, cannot forgive him so easily, for she holds him responsible, and rightly so. Horace was chosen to perform his duty and Sabine could blame fate for her misfortunes. But no

compulsion, except an inner sense of duty, forces Titus to renounce his love, and Bérénice is cognizant of this fact:

Quand votre heureux amour peut tout ce qu'il désire,  
Lorsque Rome se tait, quand votre père expire,  
Lorsque tout l'univers fléchit à vos genoux,  
Enfin quand je n'ai plus à redouter que vous.

To which Titus makes the assertion of his individual will:

Et c'est moi seul aussi qui pouvois me détruire.  
Je pouvois vivre alors et me laisser séduire.  
Mon coeur se gardoit bien d'aller dans l'avenir  
Chercher ce qui pouvoit un jour nous désunir.  
Je voulois qu'à mes vœux rien ne fut invincible;  
Je n'examinois rien, j'espérois l'impossible.  
Que sais-je? j'espérois de mourir à vos yeux,  
Avant que d'en venir à ces cruels adieux.  
Les obstacles sembloient renouveler ma flamme.  
Tout l'Empire parloit; mais la gloire, Madame,  
Ne s'étoit point encor fait entendre à mon coeur  
Du ton dont elle parle au coeur d'un empereur.

(IV,v, 1083-1102)

This statement of Titus throws light on the different quality of the Racinean concept of honor as opposed to the Cornelian one. In Corneille's tragedies, as in Dryden's, duty has an absolute value unrelated to the circumstances which create it. That is, whatever the circumstances, a hero can act in only one way. Horace has to fight the Curiaces; the fact that they are his friends and brothers-in-law has no bearing on the quality of his duty. But for Titus the problem presents itself in an entirely different way: when his country, his father, the Senate opposed his love for Bérénice, he defied them. But when all outside interference is removed, when he is left face to face with his own self, it is then that his duty to his country takes on its full value. What is permissible for Titus the citizen becomes out of the range of Titus the emperor, the personification of all

power. Where Horace finds fulfillment and physical exhilaration, Titus finds a sort of spiritual death: "Mais il ne s'agit plus de vivre, il faut régner." He is not even afraid to carry the assumption to actual physical death:

J'espère que bientôt la triste renommée  
 Vous fera confesser que vous étiez aimée.  
 Vous verrez que Titus n'a pu sans expirer...  
 (IV,vi, 1123-1125)

When Bérénice offers to stay with him even though he does not marry her, he seems to relent: "Demeurez." But he overwhelms Bérénice with examples of heroic behavior taken from Roman history; even Bérénice has to understand his reluctance. Proudly she leaves him, with the weight of her intended suicide on his conscience.

Titus wants to rush after her, but Paulin stops him: Bérénice is being watched; she is in no danger. Besides, Titus should not feel crushed:

Mais regardez plus loin: songez, en ce malheur,  
 Quelle gloire va suivre un moment de douleur,  
 Quels applaudissements l'univers vous prépare,  
 Quel rang dans l'avenir. (IV, vi, 1209-1212)

This is the image of the heroic hero as he sees himself in Corneille's and Dryden's plays, which is not how Titus sees himself: "Non, je suis un barbare. Moi-même je me hais." Horace is proud of his fate. Titus deplores it: "Ah, Rome! Ah, Bérénice! Ah, prince malheureux! / Pourquoi suis-je empereur? Pourquoi suis-je amoureux?"

Antiochus rushes in to beg him to go to Bérénice: "Bérénice va peut-être expirer dans les bras de Phénice." He must go to her or renounce all claim to humanity: "Sauvez tant de vertus, de grâces,

de beauté, / Ou renoncez, Seigneur, à toute humanité." (IV, vii, 1237-1238) But Paulin, on the other hand, informs him that the Senate is waiting for him. Titus goes to the Senate, once more asking Antiochus to replace him at Bérénice's side. However, his last words are ambiguous:

Voyez la Reine. Allez. J'espère à mon retour  
Qu'elle ne pourra plus douter de mon amour.  
(IV, viii, 1253-1254)

At the start of Act V, the problem is still unsolved. Bérénice has reached utter despair and is ready to die. Titus is torn by his love for her and comes back from the Senate ready to show her how much he loves her. Antiochus assumes that this proof of his love can only mean that Titus has at last relented and told the Senate he has decided to marry Bérénice. When Titus goes to her, Bérénice is all sarcasm:

Retournez, retournez vers ce sénat auguste  
Qui vient vous applaudir de votre cruauté.  
Hé bien! avec plaisir l'avez-vous écouté?  
Êtes-vous pleinement content de votre gloire?  
Avez-vous bien promis d'oublier ma mémoire?  
Mais ce n'est pas assez expier vos amours?  
Avez-vous bien promis de me haïr toujours?  
(V, v, 1328-1334)

When Titus assures her that he has told the Senate nothing and that he loves her, she replies: "Vous m'aimez, vous me le soutenez; / Et cependant je pars, et vous me l'ordonnez!" She is holding a letter which Titus seizes and reads: it was meant to be read by him after her death, for her departure was only a stratagem to enable her to commit suicide more freely. Titus sends for Antiochus and turns to

Bérénice. His tone is stern and business-like and is the more powerful for it. He tells her that his sufferings are even greater than he expected them to be. He is ashamed of his own behavior since he can think of nothing but his love and concern for her. He has not even told Rome of his decision to part from her. When he comes to her, what does he find? Imminent death. This is too much: "C'en est trop. Ma douleur, à cette triste vue, / A son dernier excès est enfin parvenue." He has reached the limit of his suffering. But this does not mean he has changed his mind. He never will:

Ne vous attendez point que las de tant d'alarmes,  
 Par un heureux hymen je tarisse vos larmes.  
 En quelque extrémité que vous m'ayez réduit,  
 Ma gloire inexorable à toute heure me suit:  
 Sans cesse elle présente à mon âme étonnée  
 L'Empire incompatible avec votre hyménée,  
 Me dit qu'après l'éclat et les pas que j'ai faits,  
 Je dois vous épouser encor moins que jamais.  
 (V, vi, 1391-1398)

Titus is a Roman. When Romans are cornered, they know one noble way out. Consequently, if Berenice should persist in her design, she will have his blood on her hands:

Si vos pleurs plus longtemps viennent frapper ma vue,  
 Si toujours à mourir je vous vois résolue,  
 S'il faut qu'à tous moments je tremble pour vos jours,  
 Si vous ne me jurez d'en respecter le cours,  
 Madame, à d'autres pleurs vous devez vous attendre:  
 En l'état où je suis, je puis tout entreprendre,  
 Et je ne réponds pas que ma main à vos yeux  
 N'ensanglante à la fin nos funestes adieux.  
 (V, vi, 1415-1422)

Antiochus comes in thinking Titus and Bérénice are reconciled and ready to be married. He tells Titus of his love for Bérénice which he has been unable to surmount: "Pour ne la plus aimer j'ai cent fois

combattu: / Je n'ai pu l'oublier." The only solution for him is death.

Bérénice, who all this time has been seated, stands up:

Arrêtez, arrêtez. Princes trop généreux,  
En quelle extrémité me jetez-vous tous deux!  
Soit que je vous regarde, ou que je l'envisage,  
Partout du désespoir je rencontre l'image.  
Je ne vois que des pleurs, et je n'entends parler  
Que de trouble, d'horreurs, de sang prêt à couler.  
(V, vii, 1469-1474)

She turns to Titus. Finally, she is convinced he loves her. That is all she wanted. She will prove to him she loves him just as much: she will live:

Je crois, depuis cinq ans jusqu'à ce dernier jour,  
Vous avoir assuré d'un véritable amour.  
Ce n'est pas tout: je veux, en ce moment funeste,  
Par un dernier effort couronner tout le reste.  
Je vivrai, je suivrai vos ordres absolus.  
Adieu, Seigneur, réglez: je ne vous verrai plus.  
(V, vii, 1489-1494)

Turning to Antiochus, she asks him to follow her example:

Sur Titus et sur moi réglez votre conduite.  
Je l'aime, je le fuis: Titus m'aime, il me quitte.  
Portez loin de mes yeux vos soupirs et vos fers.  
(V, vii, 1499-1501)

Her last words are for Titus: "Pour la dernière fois, adieu, Seigneur."

Titus is a heroic hero. Not once does he falter in his determination to perform what he considers is his duty; and what he does is for "la gloire." There is no doubt that "gloire" for Titus means inner self-respect. He repeatedly rejects the popular praise which Paulin keeps bringing up to bolster his spirits. He cannot be bothered with it. His problem is inner: how can he face himself if, as emperor, he fails his own people, those who have put their trust

in him. It is the essential different quality in the scale of values to which they refer, that separates the Cornelian and Drydenian from the Racinian hero. Titus creates his own duty, it originates in him, and he is ready to bear the responsibilities it entails, even when these responsibilities mean the loss of all that he considers worth living for. This is why Hérénice has to end tragically. Titus must be made conscious of the adverse consequences of his decision to give it its full value. Since he is responsible for his act, if this act means the eventual acquirement of further happiness, in what manner would this act be heroic? For the Cornelian and Drydenian hero, the logic of their case demands a happy ending. They did not take the responsibility for their act; Society (or Authority) did. And Society (or Authority), has to reward them if it wants other heroes to follow their example. These heroes put their trust in a code of life which must reward them if chaos is not to take the upper hand. The concept of eventual reward is essential to all doctrinaire or dogmatic philosophies, governments, or religions. They demand of the individual a complete trust, a complete denial of the self in return for the promised land, if not in this world, then in the next, if not in this generation, then in the next. "Denial of the self" is purposely used here in contrast to what can be qualified in Titus as self-denial. The Cornelian hero denies himself all self-expression to the extent that he becomes the personification of the better qualities which, as a group, society wants to find in its components. This hero is a superman because



he is the common-denominator of the individuals which make up a group. He does in no way transcend himself, since at no moment does he give expression to that self, unless a low physical attraction to a member of the opposite sex can be termed "expression of the self." Titus, on the contrary, attains true self-denial. He knows he can expect no reward, he knows that only death, both in the realm of the physical and the emotional, awaits him; yet, he performs his duty. He can do nothing else since this duty is a reflection of his very inner being; it is a part of himself, he has worked it out, and assumed its responsibilities; in fine, it is through expression of his inner self that he can attain self-denial. We recognize here, of course, an important aspect of the Jansenist tenets, which puzzles many when they are first acquainted with the ideology of the movement. If grace is predestined, and nothing of what we do or do not, on this earth, matters, then why should we act rightly? Titus gives a partial answer; it is to satisfy neither man nor God but the inner self. This does not imply, in any way, self-satisfaction. Self-satisfaction is a way of reward, and it is rejected precisely on those grounds; Titus condemns himself with such words as "barbare" and "cruel." It is only that his sense of duty is part of man's being and is to be given expression. This is the reason why Titus never wavers in his decision. He has looked into himself, examined his motives, and arrived at the conclusion as to what is right and wrong. This self-reliance, self-analysis, is, of course, what brings Jansenism so close to Protestant movements, and what made it at all times a heresy

in the eyes of the Catholic church.

Contrary to Titus, many of the heroes we have examined in Dryden's plays, at one moment or another, waver in the performance of their duty. This is quite understandable since their duty does not originate within themselves but must always be present in front of their eyes; when blinded by one thing or another (usually their physical desire for the woman they love), they lose sight of their duty and need a helping hand to keep them going. This helping hand, as we have seen, is more often than not, the heroine's. In Corneille's Titus et Bérénice, Bérénice performs that role for Titus. In their last scene together, when he inquires, "L'amour peut-il se faire une si douce loi?", Bérénice answers: "La raison me la fait malgré vous, malgré moi." Corneille's Bérénice stands for reason. Racine's stands for love. Not once in her last scene does she use the word reason. It is her love that made her better, not her reason:

Adieu; servons tous trois d'exemple à l'univers  
De l'amour la plus tendre et la plus malheureuse  
Dont il puisse garder l'histoire douloureuse.  
(V,vii, 1502-1504)

This brings out the fact that Bérénice is the heroine of the play, because it is she who undergoes development, and eventually transcends the limitations of her egotistical self through love and renunciation. And Titus helps her do this.

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If at this point we consider the technique which Corneille and Racine applied to their respective drama, we shall find it varies

immensely from one author to the other. George May has a valuable study on the subject in which he examines the plays in terms of their dramatic value -- "du point de vue de l'intérêt qu'elles suscitent."<sup>26</sup> He finds them to be diametrically opposed because the purposes of the playwrights are opposed. According to May, Corneille displays excellent showmanship because he is interested in the intrigue or action. Racine despises the intrigue because he is interested in the human passions:

Pour susciter et maintenir l'intérêt, Corneille n'hésite pas à utiliser au maximum ce qu'il y a précisément de plus matériel dans la matière tragique. Racine, au contraire, n'a pour l'intrigue qu'un mépris absolu. Il ne l'accepte que parce qu'il lui est impossible de faire autrement, parce que, sans intrigue, les passions n'ont plus aucune raison, plus aucun prétexte pour se manifester, et parce que c'est justement vers l'analyse et l'étude de ces passions déchainées que va sa prédilection d'écrivain.<sup>27</sup>

Let us just note that even a critic as discerning as May seems to oppose intrigue and passions as if they belonged to a common domain. He does not say they do, but nevertheless holds that one is the forte of Corneille and the other of Racine. In other words, he says that Racine spurns the intrigue because he is interested in the passions, whereas Corneille relies heavily on it. But he does not say why. Eventually, in the course of the study, he gives what we believe is a partial answer, even though an unconscious one. At one point he states that Corneille wanted above all else to please his audience and that he knew that the best way to achieve this was to work on the emotions of the public: "C'est avec, en tête, cet objectif essentiel de plaire et donc d'émouvoir que Corneille aborde le théâtre, et c'est

vers ce but que nous le voyons aller constamment de toute la force pas toujours heureuse de son instinct dramatique."<sup>28</sup> The emotional response which Corneille expects from his audience is not one of pity or fear but rather one of admiration, through what May terms "le Nietzschéisme avant la lettre." This Nietzscheism is what May finds in Corneille's drama. That is, he accepts the traditional concept of Corneille's hero as admirable, a superman, an idealized personification of what each individual ought to be: "un surhomme qui rappelle l'idéal des hommes de la Renaissance, et préfigure en même temps l'homme surhumain de Nietzsche."<sup>29</sup>

From our point of view, having identified the nature of the Cornelian heroic hero, we can see that the reason Corneille relies on intrigue and what May calls the "outrance" of a situation and characterization is that his art is rhetorical. The purpose of his drama is to carry the spectator away and win him over before he has had time to reflect. Racine's purpose is, on the contrary, to open the eyes of the spectator and make him look into the deepest, darkest recesses of a character, that is, of himself, the spectator. This is one reason why we find it so difficult to agree entirely with May and those critics who hold the view that Corneille paints men as they should be and Racine, as they are. Corneille's art is of an escapist nature, and we are all more or less escapists. But where is the person who analyzes his own inner motives and impulses, and especially who condemns himself in the manner that Racine's characters do? On the other hand, the rhetorical power of Corneille's

plays has often been put to the test. For instance, during World War I Horace was the play most frequently acted by the Comédie Française; the French government felt that the play's heavy emphasis on patriotism made it well suited to bolster the morale of the French people.

Nevertheless, whatever are the ends which he ascribes to Corneille's and Racine's theatre, George May's analysis of their respective techniques is essentially valid. From the standpoint of the study of Dryden's plays, this analysis is interesting, in that more often than not, what is valid for Corneille is equally valid for Dryden.

As we know, Dryden's plays like Corneille's, are mainly intrigue, an accumulation of events which carry the spectator from climax to climax, through suspense and surprise. Like Corneille, Dryden is more interested in repeatedly showing his hero in situations demanding the utmost of his valor. It is this purpose which, according to May, draws Corneille toward the invraisemblable. History provides him with "le point de départ et l'aboutissement de son action." In between, he feels free to fill the gap as he pleases. We recognize Dryden also in this description. Dryden used historical facts and characters -- the conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards, the fall of Granada, Maximin and Saint Catherine, for instance -- but he was not faithful to them. To provoke the imagination, he needed free rein, and could not allow himself to be limited by history. As drama, his plays, like Corneille's, were of his own invention. Even in such plays as Oedipus, Troilus and Cressida, and All for Love, the

traditional stories are altered beyond recognition. If we take All for Love, for instance, non-historical elements are not only introduced as part of the plot but even constitute the mainsprings of its action: Ventidius, a friend and mentor whose influence makes Anthony lean toward duty; Dolabella who loves Cleopatra and provokes Anthony's jealousy which is the cause of his eventual stay in Alexandria; Octavia and her children, etc. A plot that is not well known makes it easier for an author to provoke surprise, and surprise is the mainstay of the drama of intrigue. This serves Dryden's purpose but not Racine's. In Racine, no element of surprise is derived from the plot. The simpler the plot and the better known, the more Racine relishes it. Where Corneille tries to focus the attention of the spectator on the act, Racine tries to eliminate the act per se in order to concentrate attention on the motive. The more audiences know of the plot, the less Racine has to tell them about it and the freer he is to tackle other points of interest. With a known plot, there is no surprise and coup de théâtre, and the tension is derived only from the interplay of human passions. As we know, this is not the case for Dryden's plays. The range of the passions which he treats in them is so limited and repetitious that he could not afford the concentration of Racine. Dryden, like Corneille, needed the suspense and surprise derived from an unknown and crowded plot: one can read or view The Conquest of Granada over and over with nearly the same amount of interest at each reading because it is practically impossible to remember the events in any logical or illogical order.

The spectator is kept so busy trying to recall what happens that he has no time to reflect on why things happen. But as the plots of Lear or Phèdre or Othello become more familiar with each reading, these plays take on new dimensions and the reader gains further insight into their meaning.

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What has preceded is certainly no study of the comparative value of Corneille and Racine, and even less so of Dryden and Racine. The only validity of such a study, in relation to the heroic hero in Dryden's plays, is that it may throw some light on the nature of that hero. It has seemed interesting to show that within a certain literary tradition, in this case, neo-classicism, there can be not only divergence, but opposition in the nature of the works produced. This may be a truism. However, in the case of Dryden's plays, we have seen in the earlier part of this study, how the majority of critics have always taken up form and matter as if they were interchangeable, concentrating mostly on form, and making it responsible for the lack of interesting matter. That is, neo-classicism, with its profusion of critical tenets, was made answerable for that kind of plays which Dryden and his contemporaries wrote and enjoyed. Dryden wrote the way he did because of the influence of the epic, the rule of the three unities, the concept of poetic justice, etc. To deny that these influences worked on Dryden is out of the question. But to assume that they are the shaping factors of his drama is, we believe, to stretch the point too far. However, if in our comparative analysis

of the dramatic works of Dryden, Corneille, and Racine, we have succeeded in showing that, working under the same critical influences, they nevertheless produced different kinds of drama, we believe that a step forward in the understanding of Dryden's plays has been made. The near identity between Dryden's and Corneille's concept of the drama takes on further importance when we stop to consider that Dryden was not only cognizant but also appreciative of the Elizabethan theatre and Shakespeare.

If working within the same neo-classic tradition, and doing their best to conform to its tenets, different dramatists arrive at different results, they must belong to different schools of thought. In other words, given one form, the only thing that can be different is the matter. Corneille's and Dryden's is one, Racine's, another. At one point in this study, we advanced the theory that the historical "moment" may have been a determining factor in the kind of drama which both Corneille and Dryden wrote. Later we mentioned that Corneille's plays met with renewed favor in the first half of the twentieth century. It is interesting to see how the historical "moment" theory applies in this case. It is impossible to go into each work and examine the validity of the arguments offered by critics in support of Corneille. A few facts, however, may be sufficient to throw some light on the reasons for this trend. We have already pointed out that Horace was the play most frequently acted by the Comédie Française during World War I. After the war, Charles Péguy, the great Catholic poet, became the nucleus of a movement in favor



of Corneille, a movement which stressed the sublime (grandeur), sacrifice, and transcendence of the self in Corneille's drama. Jean Schlumberger, in his Plaisir à Corneille, opposes Corneille's "art heroique" to Racine's "art de jouissance" and finds Corneille's art better suited to modern times; he is happy that with the growing appreciation of Corneille, he can see "l'austérité reprendre le pas sur l'hédonisme et la volonté sur l'intelligence."<sup>30</sup> Robert Brasillach, in a long work extolling Corneille's greatness, compares him favorably to Shakespeare: "Oui, vraiment, il a été notre Shakespeare."<sup>31</sup> Octave Nadal would explain the whole Cornelian world by the concept of "gloire." He believes that "Passions, sentiments, devoirs, vertus, sont tournés vers la gloire. Les conflits qui peuvent naître entre eux, seule la gloire les résout." He differentiates "gloire" from "honneur" in that "gloire" is a personal obligation while "honneur" is the obedience to rules: "Mais le sentiment de la gloire, du moins dans son mouvement le plus beau, ressemble plus à une exigence intime qu'à ce qu'on doit aux règles de l'honneur, toujours un peu extérieures." This "gloire" Nadal associates with freedom: "...gloire secrète, qui répond à une exigence de la nature profonde de l'homme cornélien et exprime en définitive sa liberté intérieure."<sup>32</sup> A most interesting critic is André Rousseaux, whose very perceptiveness gives away the key to an understanding of the modern movement in favor of Corneille.<sup>33</sup> Let us specify that Rousseaux's favorable study on Corneille which we are going to examine was written in 1941 during World War II and was printed at that time in

Canada. Rousseaux believes, like Schlumberger, that Corneille's characters are not torn by conflict, "Ame sans problèmes," and opposes them to Racine's, who by concentrating on their inner motives display what Rousseaux calls "le culte du moi." He is of the opinion that Horace is probably Corneille's most representative play because "Cette espèce d'héroïsme absolu, où l'homme se réalise d'autant plus magnifiquement qu'il s'oublie davantage, convient tout à fait à la tendance de Corneille, qui est de se détourner des problèmes pour s'élever dans de beaux actes."<sup>34</sup> Rousseaux then, in spite of his use of the word "évader", still believes that Horace attains a fuller realization by losing himself in the act he performs. When in another part of his essay, Rousseaux states "l'élan verbal et l'élan moral ne font qu'un dans la poésie cornélienne,"<sup>35</sup> Rousseaux is being complimentary, implying that the oral rhetoric necessarily means a moral reality. He goes further and advances the opinion that the first may produce the second: "Est-il sûr même que le premier ne met pas le second en mouvement?"<sup>36</sup> Rousseaux is ready to admit that Corneille's drama is built on one big heroic lie, "le mensonge héroïque," but he equates this lie with charity: "le mensonge héroïque ou, si l'on veut, le jeu que l'homme joue par vertu, par noblesse et générosité. C'est le jeu où une sorte de charité parfois supérieure, parfois excessive, parfois même fantaisiste, s'exerce aux dépens du jeu inverse, du jeu sévère et inexorable de la vérité....Le mensonge héroïque est une forme du don de soi."<sup>37</sup> For Rousseaux, the Cornelian hero is a sort of Don Quixote. What makes Don Quixote great is that

he believes in what he is fighting for, in an idea. The important thing to note in the following passage is the pessimism which Rousseaux unconsciously displays:

Or ce sont les idées qui demeurent, avec une pureté et une solidité inaltérables, au-dessus des objets que les atteintes du temps, les incertitudes de notre perception, les illusions de notre sensibilité, les pauvres limites de notre intelligence rendent fragiles, caducs, douteux, vains souvent, et parfois sans existence réelle. Nous vivons parmi des moulins à vent et des mirages. Nous nous faisons de surprenantes images de la réalité des choses. Les arbres que nous croyons le plus fortement enracinés et dont nous admirons les cimes moutonneuses, mais dont la nature chaque jour dévore la substance, n'ont peut-être pas une réalité beaucoup plus certaine que les nuages dont le vent fait et défait les architectures. Et cette chair même que notre âme anime, ces pieds qui nous portent, ce sang qui nous nourrit, et toute cette vie dont nous vivons et qui nous continuera, que d'illusions en elle, qui s'y renouvellent, y foisonnent, y font étendue et volume! Le mensonge est le tissu de la vie terrestre.<sup>38</sup>

In a later essay, Rousseaux stresses the predominance of sacrifice in Corneille's plays. This opinion is hard to understand. Where does sacrifice reside for Horace when all he feels is exhilaration and fulfillment as the results of his act? The logic of the happy ending denies all sacrificial value to any act, on these grounds, by the hero. On the other hand, Rousseaux defends Corneille from any accusation that would qualify him as the exponent of authority and strength. If the state or the King are magnified to such a great extent in Corneille, Rousseaux believes that it is because the state or the King is the sum total of the individuals and can ask of them, on these premises, any sacrifice it deems necessary. It is difficult to understand how, as he wrote this second essay after the war, Rousseaux was unable to see how close he was to totalitarian

ideology:

Il montre dans le souverain selon Corneille un homme dont la gloire peut exiger de tous les autres humains ce que, chez le héros cornélien qui n'est pas roi, la gloire exige de lui seul. Chez le roi cornélien, le mécanisme sacrificiel dont la gloire est le moteur se transpose de la vie personnelle à toute la société humaine.<sup>39</sup>

If we have dwelled at some length on Rousseaux, it is because we find him representative. We believe that his stand and that of the other critics mentioned reflect the growing feeling of insecurity characteristic of our century, the need, in troubled times, for action that promises results, for the security that has always seemed to be linked with order and conformity. In other words, the historical "moment" of today has many points of similitude with the historical "moment" in which Corneille wrote in the 1630's and Dryden in the 1670's.

## CHAPTER VI

### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Essays of John Dryden, ed. W. P. Ker, Vol. I, where Ker stresses this point throughout his introduction; also Pierre Legouis's "Corneille and Dryden as Dramatic Critics," in Seventeenth Century Studies (Oxford, 1938), pp. 269-291; and Arthur C. Kirsch, "Dryden, Corneille and the Heroic Play," ELH, LIX (1962), 248-264.

<sup>2</sup>Oeuvres de Pierre Corneille, ed. Marty Laveaux (Paris, 1910) I, 13-122.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 53

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 57-58.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 68-69.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 79-80.

<sup>18</sup>Oeuvres, III, 282-358.

<sup>19</sup>Cited by Marty Laveaux, Oeuvres de Pierre Corneille (Paris, 1922), III, 256.

<sup>20</sup>Oeuvres, p. 273.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 275.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid. Corneille is alluding to Horace's trial in Act VI for the murder of Camille where he is only saved by his father's plea and in consideration of his past services to his country.

<sup>23</sup>Oeuvres de J. Racine, ed. Paul Mesnard (Paris, 1923), II, 375.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., II, 376.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pp. 382-454.

<sup>26</sup>George May, Tragédie Cornélienne, Tragédie Racinienne, Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, XXXII (Urbana, 1948), p. 13.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>30</sup>Jean Schlumberger, Plaisir à Corneille (Paris, 1936), p. 10.

<sup>31</sup>Robert Brasillach, Pierre Corneille (Paris, 1938), p. 373.  
A fact that may be of interest is that Brasillach was executed at the end of World War II for collaboration with the German Nazi regime.

<sup>32</sup>Octave Nadal, Le sentiment de l'amour dans l'oeuvre de Pierre Corneille (Paris, 1948), pp. 302, 299, 307.

<sup>33</sup>André Rousseaux, Le Monde Classique (Paris, 1941).

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., pp. 47-48.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., pp. 63-64.

<sup>39</sup>André Rousseaux, Le Monde Classique, III (Paris, 1951).

## CONCLUSION

In reviewing a large part of the body of modern criticism on Dryden's heroic plays, we have found that while it concentrates on form, sources and influences, it neglects characterization when it does not ignore it altogether. One of the major consequences of such a neglect has been to foster the mistaken notion that the conflict in the heroic plays is between love and honor when actually the conflict, if any, is between reason and passion. This becomes evident when the characterization of the heroic hero is studied in relation to the play considered as drama -- that is, by relying not on what the hero thinks or says he is, but on examining what he does under given circumstances. In reviewing the plots of Dryden's heroic plays, it was established that the hero is the one who dominates his passion to obey reason, and in thus doing, is rewarded with the love of the heroine. Passion is what leads the hero away from honor and reason what draws him to it. In examining this concept of honor in relation to the hero, that is, not in its absolute or relative value, but in the way it influences the hero's actions, we have found it to be a set of rules, a scale of values, a code of life, in the creation of which the hero never had any part, but which is offered him by the social structure in which he lives. The nature of the hero's

allegiance to this honor is found to be one of blind commitment, of denial of all self-expression in the interest of the common weal. This overall portrait of the hero, if valid, is then completely contradictory to the accepted one of a romantic super-individual bent on self-aggrandizement and on a Marlovian search for power. On the contrary, as seen in the plays, the hero is not the one who gives way to self-expression, but rather the one who concentrates in his person the ideal qualities looked for by society in its representatives and servants.

This interpretation of the hero as the embodiment of common sense and order seems more logical than the accepted one, if we consider, on one hand, the contemporary political and philosophical background of the heroic plays, and on the other, Dryden's own psychological evolution.

Two of the more important trends of thought in the Restoration period are the equating of reason with common sense on one hand and the flourishing scepticism and its corollary Pyrrhonism on the other. Both trends are reflected in the heroic plays in that through reason considered as a means to an end, it is possible to arrive at a relative state of happiness on the condition that the individual relies not on himself and his personal whim but on the social structure which surrounds him and which advocates order through conformity.

An examination of the historical events of the period reveals that after years of political chaos in which factions were constantly at each other's throats, England was ready for order and authority;



that is, England, fifty years later, was living the same political events that formed the background for the blossoming of Corneille's heroic plays.

When, in turn, Dryden's own intellectual affinities, as set forth in Bredvold's discerning study, are considered, we find that his essentially sceptical bent would make it natural for him to create a type of hero that could correspond to his distrust of the individual and satisfy his thirst for authority.

If we are to agree that an author should produce the type of character which best satisfies him, then we should find that in Dryden's dramatic work other than the heroic plays, his heroes should be essentially characterized in the same manner, which is exactly what we find -- the only difference between the two kinds of plays being in the heavy stress placed on pity in the latter plays as opposed to terror in the former, thus pointing directly toward the sentimental drama of the eighteenth century.

Further proof is offered by a comparative study of plays by Dryden, Corneille and Racine. This study, though cursory, shows plainly that Dryden, in spite of the fact that he was a contemporary of Racine, wrote plays in the manner of Corneille. Dryden's and Corneille's concept of the heroic hero is identical and is at the opposite pole from Racine's. In fine, Dryden's heroic plays, far from being a "passing whim," a movement outside the main course of English literature, are, on the contrary, a true reflection of the period and of the author, and are an important link in the evolution of the English drama.

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Title of Thesis: The Hero in Dryden's Heroid Tragedy: A Revaluation

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Date of Examination:

May 8, 1963